

KWANTUNG MESSAGE

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by

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HIS Excellency, Governor Enming, was a slow fat man. His breath came in tormented waves; his myopic eyes contracted when he entered the Police School. Disdaining to wear glasses, he saw the Police Cadets parading in the school compound as unruly, doubled and tripled outlines. The buttons of their uniforms glittered, blurred and magnified in the sun.

The air was tepid, under the South-West Monsoon.

His Excellency, Governor Enming, stood rigid. Si-Lin, the short, lean Commandant of the Police Schcol, came towards him.

A few minutes ago Si-Lin had addressed the assembled Cadets :

“His Excellency, Enming, Governor of our Province Anhui, is going to inspect our school.” He waited a little. Then he said: “You, my friends—act always together and as one man.”

Si-Lin marched towards the Governor who, blinking, looked at him. Si-Lin’s dark eyes stared at Enming’s black, drooping moustache; stopping in front of him, saluting smartly, he said distinctly :

"Your Excellency, I have the honour to be a member of the Revolutionary Party."

Suddenly there was a pistol in his hand. He saw the tips of Enming's moustache quiver, and he shot. The Governor's obese body fell, with a last bewildered movement.

The Staff Officers who had accompanied Enming, drew their pistols and advanced, shooting at Si-Lin. The Police Cadets ran forward and, covering Si-Lin, returned the fire.

The officers, a mere handful, had to flee. But the barracks of the town opened and the battalions garrisoned in them, emerged to besiege the Police School.

Si-Lin's Cadets held out till they had fired their last round. But Si-Lin was taken prisoner, alive.

The air was humid and heavy with the South-West Monsoon, disturbed by the borders of a typhoon. The grey-yellow dust of the country turned mire. The rains fell in torrents, swelling the Yellow River.

Sampan coolies squatted freezing on barrels and bales of merchandise. On board a junk floating down the Hoang-Ho, an old man opened his opium-dimmed eyes and shrivelled mouth, to tell one of the old tales :

"Chow Sin and Ta Ki" he said; "once upon a time there lived Chow Sin and Ta Ki. Chow Sin ruled China, Ta Ki was his mistress. She was wanton, cruel, a spendthrift. Yet she was beautiful, very beautiful. Her will-power swept Chow Sin as the swollen river sweeps a rice corn. The people groaned under the taxes she invented. But nobody groaned for a long time."

He paused to cough and spit, to breathe painfully his share of heavy, humid air. The coolies stared at the misty river.

"Nobody, I said, muttered long. Ta Ki had invented a toaster; a copper barrel over a gigantic basin full of burning coal. The barrel circulated and whoever muttered, had to dance on the circulating barrel on his bare feet till, with burned soles and in unbearable pain, he fell down into the fire. Ta Ki watched, smiling prettily."

"Prince Wu: yet there lived Prince Wu, He assembled his friends and followers. He did not whisper, he talked, upright and bold:

'Heaven and Earth are father and mother of the Universe.'

'Man is the highest of all creation. A man of brilliance and commonsense be ruler of his fellow men; but he be ruler to be father and mother to them. Chow Sin flang away shame and humility in the face of Heaven and its laws. He tortures the people on Earth. Heaven orders us to annihilate him; for Heaven sees with the eyes of the people and hears with the ears of the people.'

"When spring came, Prince Wu took Chow Sin's capital by assault. Ta Ki, the beautiful, had a castle made of jade. In a tower of this castle Chow Sin killed himself, in a basin of burning coal."

A junk with orange sails fought her way upriver —the coolies left their bales and ran astern. When the other junk was alongside, they shouted their messages. The coolies under the orange sails replied with theirs in high staccato syllables only few of

which came over the roaring river. But when the junks had passed each other, the coolies knew this news :

“The price of rice in Shantung is higher, the price of rice in Kiangsu is doubled . . .”

Aloof from the others stood a coolie ; a sturdy young man with haggard cheeks, in a turban of cotton rags. He lowered his bare brawny arms which had rapidly gesticulated in a mute language of signs. An elderly coolie under the orange sails started to gesticulate.

The screwed-up eyes of the youngster in the turban took the signs in : Sin-Lin, Commandant of the Police School in Anhui, has been executed. Many others—executed. Query : Is Sun Ke-U in Loyang ? I have an important message for Sun Ke-U and for the Ho-Lao-Chuey (Clan of the Elder Brethren). A message from the Head with the wide forehead and the bushy brows, a message from Sun Yat Sen, the Man from the South.

NORTH is North, South is South. In the North, the Hoang-Ho floods the loam washing away its own bed. The place of its disemboguing changes decade by decade. In the South, the Yangtsekiang spouts water veins through the fertile ground. Boats ply like carts. Water buffalos wallow in swampy paddy fields. In the North, lean, red-brown cows stray over poor millet fields. Hungry peasants stare anxiously. In the South, the peasants assemble from time to time, shout and kill the daoins. "Ho" means river in the North. "Kiang" means river in the South. From the North came the Manchus to oppress the people. In the South the Taiping rose in revolt.

Hung Siutsuen, a man of the Hakka Tribe, lived in the South, in Canton. One day he fell down in an epileptic fit ; foaming at the mouth, he shivered on the ground ; his eyes, palpitating in their sockets, saw: A Dragon, a Tiger and a Cock stood in front of him. Many men came, lifted him on a palanquine and carried him to a palace where mild sages and saints bowed before him. They extracted his heart and his liver and threw them away, planting in his body a new red heart and a fresh red liver. Then they took

him to a throne on which an old man with a golden beard was sitting, shrinking into black robes. He cried ; and his tears spoke :

"I am the Creator. All creatures wear of my clothes and eat of my bread. Yet, taking my presents, they sacrifice them to the demons. Whoever worships me ?"

He gave Hung a sword, a seal and a yellow fruit. All men fell down at Hung's feet, all beings of this world which, now that he understood it, was corrupt and terrifying . . .

He woke up. Exhausted, he lay in a trance for forty days and nights. He knew now that he was destined to rule China, to become rich and powerful.

One day, his wife's brother showed him a pamphlet ; Bible quotations which Robert Morrison, a missionary and interpreter of the East India Company had in 1810 translated into Chinese.

Reading the pamphlet, Hung realised that the old man with the golden beard whom he had seen, was the God Father of the Christians. He, Hung Siutsuen, was chosen to convert and to distribute.

He wandered about to preach. Mendicants, starving farmers, inquisitive loafers followed him. He baptized them in river water and preached the Realm of God, as he understood it. His understanding was the same as that of the peasants : God's children are all alike. At the dawn of God's Realm, the ground, the fields, forests and hills now distributed without justice, should be shared out anew, equally. This was a goal worth fighting for ; the peasants revolted.

Chung Yang-Tshi, generalissimo of the Taiping Revolt, announced :

"I shall renew the system of the Shang Dynasty, who were living four thousand years ago. The land will be distributed in such a manner that everybody will be able to feed himself, his family, his wife and children. Each day of the year will be a day of joy. In years of bad harvest none should go hungry. Kill the Cruel, follow the Just. Taxes will be reduced, truth will govern, the able will lead. Whoever is brave, come to us."

The peasants rushed from South to North. They distributed the land of the heretics and idolators, of the Buddhist and Taoist temples, of the Manchu aristocracy, of the Chinese landlords, whom they killed and drove away.

This was the law of the Taiping :

"All land will be distributed according to nine categories. Land of the first category is that which in two harvests yields twelve hundred tching, of the second eleven hundred, of the third a thousand, of the fourth nine hundred, of the fifth eight hundred, of the sixth seven hundred, of the seventh six hundred, of the eighth five hundred, of the ninth four hundred. One mou of the first category is equal to 1, 1 of the second, 1, 2 of the third, 1, 3 of the fourth, 1, 5 of the fifth, 1, 75 of the sixth, 2, 0 of the seventh, 2, 4 of the eighth and 3, 0 of the ninth.

"All land will be distributed according to the number of mouths, without regard to sex and age. Many mouths need much land, a few need little. Good and bad land will be distributed equally. A family of six will receive three parts of good land, three parts of poor land. All land in the country will be tilled by all people in the country. If ground is barren, people

will go somewhere else. When there is bad harvest in one village, another village where the harvest is good will help—for all will participate in the eternal Good, the Heavenly Father, the High Lord of Creation. Where there is land it will be tilled in common. Where there is food it will be eaten in common. Where there is clothes, they will be worn in common. There must be equality—none, indeed, not a single one should be hungry and cold.”

The Taiping fought for this. Millions flocked to their banners. But although they called themselves Christians and prohibited alcohol and opium, gambling and the swathing of the feet of female babies, the missionaries condemned them and the European countries hastened to help the Manchu rulers with loans, mercenaries and arms to squash the peasant revolt.

The Manchu succeeded after years of desperate battle. The Taiping resisted fiercely, they tried to convince their opponents :

“The Highest Lord commanded us to end the evil contrast of squalid poverty and needless luxury. Father Heaven and Mother Earth did not concede to the Few the right to exploit the Many to their own pleasure. The Highest Lord never permitted the Rich and Powerful to take by force what the Oppressed created in their sweat and poverty. The warming sun, the rich earth, the beautiful world belong to all. We want to redeem them from the grip of the Few to open them to the pleasure of all.”

Rivers of blood, devastated provinces, mountainous heaps of corpses remained when the Taiping at

last vanished in defeat. After a few years, feeble at first and hidden behind strange rites, soon growing more active and determined, secret peasant organisations sprang up again.

"Fan Tsing fu Ming (Downfall of the Tsing, Reinstating of the Ming)," the pale lips of ragged shadows whispered, assembling at midnight. Defeat had made the people romantic; they hankered after the past, they wanted to expel the hated foreign Manchu Dynasty in order to recall the indigenous Ming whom the Manchu more than two hundred years ago had defeated.

The hatred of the Manchu, the hatred against everything foreign, against the inexplicable floods, draughts, poor harvests, against the only too easily explainable taxes, corrupt and blackmailing officials, ran through the land; like crackling under-ground fires, spread from the now extinguished flame of the Taiping Revolution, the unconnected, dispersed, secret peasant organisations whispered and mumbled their slogans from village to village.

In one of these villages, in Tsui-heng, Hiang-shan District, Kwantung Province, there lived a poor farmer who sacrificed to the village idols as everybody else. Yet he was a Christian and he had been a follower of the Taiping. A few years after the last Taiping had been shot, strangled, hanged or executed by the sword, the wife of this farmer gave birth to a son who was named Sun Yat Sen.

3

JOHN MACPHERSON welcomed his brother most tenderly. The two men embraced each other, for a moment their whiskers touched. Then John pressed his brother into an easy-chair, unlocked a drawer in his specked, worm-eaten bureau and fished a whisky bottle out of it. Under Charles Macpherson's pleading glance he stopped.

"I forgot," he murmured. "It's such a long time that I haven't seen you. Please forgive, dear brother, and tell me, how you are."

"The Lord protects me, thank you," Charles Macpherson said gravely. "And you, dear brother, how are things with you?"

"Not too bad, not too good," John said; he was sixty, his skin showed the paleness and the gross, open pores of the White Man who has spent decades in the tropics. His whiskers were grey, his thinning hair still blond. Over the right sleeve of his shabby checkered suit he wore a black velvet sleeve to protect the cloth from ink. He had just, in his painstaking, clear and flourishing merchant's hands, started to write "Canton, this third day of August of the year

1872" on a document, when his brother unexpectedly appeared.

Charles Macpherson was a missionary; his whiskers were black, his face sallow and cadaverous. Although his upper lip was disproportionately long, it did not cover his hideous yellow teeth. Sitting down, he fixed his glance on his brother's whiskers, trying to avoid looking at the documents, bills of lading and letterheads on the desk which undoubtedly dealt with business.

In years gone by John Macpherson had been one of the men on account of whose transactions the Plenipotentiary Tse Lsu had, in Canton and under the rule of Tao Kuan, given order to strangle many Chinese dealing in or addicted to opium and, insultingly ignoring the foreign flags waving from the storehouse that contained the opium stocks of alien traders, to burn twenty thousand two hundred ninety and one boxes filled with best Indian opium.

After the war which this insult of her flag had forced Britain to wage on China, John Macpherson had returned to Canton. Married but without children, he had paid for the education of his younger brother Charles who after finishing his studies had come to China as a missionary. On learning the nature of brother John's main trade, he had told himself that the Lord alone was to judge. John Macpherson was a pious man whose name, under a quite substantial sum, figures on every collection list for mission charities. When the two brothers were together, the word "opium" was, according to a tacit understanding, never uttered. That was quite delicate

and tactful, but in consequence they rarely looked into each other's eyes.

"Well, my dear Charles," John Macpherson said, "what makes you come from your peaceful place of work? Can I help you? I am at your service."

"My place of work isn't so peaceful," Charles said darkly. "Since the Taiping Revolt hatred of everything foreign grows. Even I and my work are misunderstood, insulted, threatened. Of course, these poor heathens are blind and the Lord has sent us to show them the light and to guide them. But our efforts cost money. I came to Canton to start a collection for our new...."

"Just a minute," John Macpherson said eagerly. He took a bell from his desk and swang it. A starved looking, bald man entered hastily—Mr. Haley, Accountant and Cashier.

"At your service, sir," he said. "Oh, Mr. Charles, how are you, sir? By the way, sir, the comprador just tells me that five new houses have been opened. And Lien Chang is going to . . ."

"I'm not talking of business just now," John Macpherson said sharply and quite embarrassed. "I called you to issue a cheque for twenty pounds to my brother—will this be sufficient, dear Charles?"

"For the time being. Accept my sincere thanks, dear John."

"Not at all."

Mr. Haley disappeared. John sighed for an unknown reason.

"I had an experience," Charles said suddenly, "which terrified me. A few days ago I walked through the village Tsui-Heng which belongs to my

district. I passed the village pagoda, a poor ramshackle building yet hateful to my sight; hiding in its confines the heathenish darkness against which I am fighting. On the steps of the pagoda, under cherrytrees, a lean yellow priest was sitting, brandishing from time to time a bamboo stick in the faces of seven boys who squatted round him—his pupils, from five to nine years old. Their lips murmured monotonous, uninterrupted litanies—filling my ears with cacophonic noises and my heart with the desire to save these children from the hands of the shrunk, ignorant heathen. I looked at him, sternly, full of reproach.

“He answered my glance with tired eyes. Apparently he was under the spell of . . . of a certain harmful dope. I stared at him, full of pity and yet anger. Suddenly a child’s voice exclaimed—and the hatred with which the cry was soaked was in weird contrast with its freshness :

‘A cursed foreign devil.’

“I was known in this village as a missionary. They were in my debt, they should be grateful. I had visited sick people and read the Bible to them. I consoled the desperate and starving, I preached patience to wait for the mercy of the Lord. And now one of them, a child, cried out full of hatred :

‘A cursed foreign devil.’

“I rushed up the steps to the pagoda. The priest and the children jumped up. The priest looked at me, tired and mocking, the children frightened yet spiteful.

“I ordered the priest to punish the boy who had

shouted. The priest bowed, smiling, and dragged a small boy in front.

'It is written,' he said, 'you should respect the foreigner, not insult him. Raise your hands in front of you, Chang.'

"The boy, trembling, raised his hands, the priest his bamboo stick, to strike. I watched him keenly to prevent him from striking too mildly. But in this moment another boy rushed forward; he was the smallest of them all but sturdy enough. He looked at me and shouted:

'A cursed foreign devil.' Then he turned to the others, exhorting them to shout. They all began to yell:

'A cursed foreign devil.'

"The boy looked at me and the priest and said triumphantly:

'Now, you can't punish Chang. Or you have to punish all of us.' And, running forward, he held his hands under the bamboo stick.

"The priest gave him at once a vigorous caning. When Chang and the other boys saw this, they ran away. I tried to get hold of them but they jumped down the side of the stairs and fled.

"Only the boy who just received his caning did not try to escape. The priest now obviously enraged with shame at the unruly flight of his disciples, applied his bamboo stick without mercy over the hands of the boy. They reddened, their skin began to tear. It was well-deserved punishment yet I felt queer at the strange obstinacy with which the boy accepted it. He cried silently, pressing his teeth on his lower lip to

stifle his sobs. And his eyes remained calm—his soul didn't feel the punishment.

“I left him in the hands of the priest and went away. Passing a bush, I heard sudden laughter, then I startled, feeling a piercing pain in the lower part of my back. Groping, I perceived an arrow which stuck there. It was a toy dart blown from a pipe, a missile children here play a lot with. I was not seriously wounded but I was a missionary. In my person the dignity of a bringer of the true faith had been insulted. I tried to apprehend the miscreant, but all I saw was a flock of children running away. Among them I recognized Chang. Another, bigger boy still held a pipe and a few darts.

“I walked on. The thought of the boy who voluntarily had held his hands under the priest's bamboo stick—out of sheer hatred against me, tortured me. I knew that boy. His father was a Christian and tried to bring up his children in the Christian faith.

“In the evening I called on that man. When he heard the story, he apologized humbly.

‘My unworthy son too will fall on his knees and apologize,’ he said ‘Come here, Sun Yat Sen.’

“The boy who had insulted me, moved from the darkness near the fireplace. He walked over to his father and looked calmly up to me. I eyed him sternly, waiting for his apology.

‘I did not want Chang to be caned for thy sake,’ he said.

‘And . . . ?’ I said sharply.

‘I did not want Chang to be caned for thy sake,’ he repeated slowly and distinctly as if I were a child he had to teach. Without doubt he was mocking me.

I grew very angry. His father came between him and me. With a deep bow, he said hastily:

‘He begs of me to tell you that he loves you and respects you. He will forever repent his insolence.’

“The boy stared at him and at me, without a word, turned and disappeared in the darkness near the fire place. Have you ever come across such obstinacy in a child?”

John Macpherson was pacing up and down.

“You were attacked by armed Chinese,” he said, accentuating every word. “You suffered a wound which at the moment is not too serious but which perhaps could have mutilated you dangerously?”

“Well,” Charles said bewildered, “they were children, it was only a toy dart . . .”

“The children were Chinese and an arrow is a weapon. I suppose you came to Canton to file an official complaint about this dastardly attack against a British missionary . . .”

“Not at all,” Charles said. “I came to start a collection . . .”

John Macpherson took his brother’s hand.

“My dear Charles,” he said, “I am afraid you are perhaps more seriously wounded than you think. At any rate, this attack on you, a British missionary, demands at once an official complaint. You see, we might need a few concessions or so . . . In our interest you should file a complaint. I am sure, immediate steps will be taken with the Chinese Government and adequate compensation will be demanded. As my brother, I hold you very dear. I shall back up your complaint energetically. Don’t you understand that in the interest of your position as

missionary you cannot let this attack go unpunished?"

"I understand," Charles said, "I shall file an official complaint."

"You always knew how to do the decent thing," John said, shaking his hand. "By the way, twenty pounds is rather little, isn't it? I'll get you another cheque for five pounds more....."

The boy Sun Yat Sen was sitting on the riverside. His bushy brows drew together; he was dissatisfied with himself. His eyes strayed from the letters of the book pages which he had resolved to study, to the slowly swaying grasses on the bank and the rippling waves of the river. He was tempted to fling pebbles in the river. And he had been determined to spend the afternoon on the riverside, studying English from the book the missionary had given him—the missionary whom he detested. All his reasoning jibbed at detesting that man; it ordered him to learn from the longnosed one whatever he could learn. But his hand had trembled when it accepted the book. He could not overcome the bodily loathing that made him recoil from the missionary's fish-belly pale skin, his watery red eyes—red eyes which throughout the whole of China were regarded as evil eyes.

He watched the swaying of the grasses, then he took again his book. Suddenly he felt, more than he saw, a shadow creeping in front of his feet.

He turned defensively. And he saw a demon standing behind him.

The demon was leaning against a tree. There was no flesh on his body, no hair on his head, his eyes, dimly glittering, had withdrawn into their sockets

like animals into their den. His lips were rotting, no teeth were behind them. The skin of his face and throat, wrinkled and pealing, was hanging down. Over miserable rags on his hips, his torso was naked, a skeleton wrapped in skin. Most terrifying under this shrivelled skeleton torso, a sudden, tight skinned immensely protruding belly sprang up. Under his belly, legs dried up as the legs of a bird, were trembling. In the grass, another small demon, likeness of the first, was lying.

When Sun Yat Sen had overcome his first breathless shock, he waxed curious. He had never seen a demon before.

"Where do you come from?" he asked. "What do you want from me?"

The demon stretched his arms out, with his shrivelled and shaking hands hanging down. He opened his rotting lips. Apparently it was difficult for him to talk. But suddenly Sun Yat Sen heard his voice—unspeakably small and weak yet high and shrill. In it floated a rattling, whistling, breaking tone that was unbearable.

"Hunger," the demon groaned. "Hunger. Give food. I am coming from the North."

Sun Yat Sen understood that this was no demon after all, and this seemed to him more terrifying than anything else. This was a man and lying in the grass was his child.

He took his book under his arm and beckoned the man to follow. When he noticed that the starving one was about to collapse, he overcame his horror and steadied him. Babbling, the man stretched his

hands towards the child in the grass. He did not see but Sun Yat Sen saw that it was already dead.

Sun Yat Sen was now ten years old and a sturdy boy. The starving one was light as a feather. Yet Sun Yat Sen shook under this burden.

Passing the paddy fields, Sun Yat Sen led the man to his father's house. There they gave him rice to eat—cautiously, for there was only a flicker of life left in him and that may be crushed under a suddenly loaded stomach no more used to food. They did not tell him that the child in his shaking arms was dead. He tried to feed the little dead manchild but he was too weak. So Sun Yat Sen took the child from his arms and pretended to put rice into the dead mouth. The man smiled quietly, perhaps hunger had weakened his mind.

"Where do you come from?" Sun Yat Sen's father asked.

"I am Kuang Ten," the starving one lisped. "From the village Li. From the North. The river flooded its banks. Our cattle were drowned. Now we had nothing to eat any more. Most people died. We went away, I, my wife and my children. My wife died on the way, my children died. Only this little manchild is still alive. Sometimes we ate on the way, grass, the bark of trees. Now I am here."

"How could the river flood its banks?" Sun Yat Sen's father asked. "Are there no dykes and dams?"

"They collapsed. That was the reason of all this. They collapsed, they were old and ill repaired."

"But have you no official responsible to inspect and repair them?"

"Sure. Many officials. And we pay high taxes for them."

"How then could they collapse?"

The man was still smiling, licking his rotting lips.

"The officials eat the taxes and the river eats the dam. Our officials take our money for their concubines, not for dams."

Sun Yat Sen's father sighed.

"We had a secret organisation," the starving one said. "All of us in the village. We called it the 'fire-tailed dragon.' Twice we blackened our faces, ambushed officials and killed them. But later soldiers came and ten of us were strangled to death. Later we started another secret organisation which we called 'Red Lily.' We refused to pay taxes. But this is very difficult. Officials came to collect the taxes. They fettered us, put ropes round our heads and twisted them tighter and tighter till we screamed. Then they took everything we possessed. In other villages too were secret organisations."

"What will you do now?" Sun Yat Sen's father asked.

"Go back again, with this my little manchild."

"Why don't you stay here?"

"I can't quite follow your talk, you talk differently. And you grow rice. I want to grow millet. I am from the North. I shall go back."

"And what will happen if the river floods its banks again?"

"What can I do? In the North there is the soil on which I can grow millet."

"The river will wash it away."

"But there is the soil where I can grow millet."

Sun Yat Sen looked intently into the man's face.
The starving one, staring anxiously, murmured :

"There, you see, is the soil on which I can grow
millet."

THE farmers had their secret organizations. The students whom Government sent to Europe and America to bring back the sciences of the West, returned with revolutionary ideas of democracy or worse. They too started secret organizations which were interdependent.

Many were beheaded, many thrown into prison cages. Others took their place. Again and again there were revolts, battles in the provinces. Money was needed to buy arms: money arrived—on the very ships which carried the coffins of Chinese who had died abroad, back to the soil of China.

In America, in Hawaii, in the Philippines, in the Dutch-Indies, in Australia, on the islands of the Pacific and of the South Sea, everywhere there were Chinese. Many were poor laundrymen and unskilled labourers. Many too were rich traders, ship-chandlers, and ship-owners. They breathed a freer air than that which the Manchu in China permitted. Merchants, their look on the realities of trade and worldwide intercourse, prefer democracy. And Chinese are realists by nature. The rich merchants and ship-owners among the Chinese abroad assisted the secret organizations of the intellectuals in the towns of China.

The poor laundrymen and labourers collected money for the secret organizations of their fathers and brothers in the villages.

Sun Yat Sen's brother who had gone to Honolulu, had become a rich trader. One day the boy Sun Yat Sen went aboard a ship to make the long journey to Honolulu where he was to study.

On the ship he met a Chinese whose name was Yih Chong ; a small shrivelled man with a lacerated nose. He had a dry cough and walked with anxious, mincing steps. Yet he was younger than he looked. He told Sun Yat Sen that he was going to Honolulu to visit his uncle.

"He is a merchant," he said. "He will give me a job. I can't stand living in China any longer. I come from Si-an, from the North. But I lived quite a time in Pekin. I was a student ; although I was almost starving, I passed my examinations. I became a member of a Revolutionary Circle." He looked cautiously round and began to lower his voice to a whisper. Sun Yat Sen and he were sitting on a coil of ropes on the foredeck. It was late, they journeyed towards the moon. In the water under her, a broad, gleaming band floated towards the keel of the ship. The ship was swaying softly, Yih Chong's features swam away into darkness. Sun Yat Sen was tired and sleepy yet he squatted on the rope coil and listened drowsily to Yih Chong's voice.

"Did you ever hear of Hwa Wee ?" Yih Chong asked. "He lived a long time in America and once he came to us to tell us how good it is to live there. These people have a constitution. They vote for the men whom they want to rule them, of their own free

will and according to their own choice. They call themselves a republic. If the men they voted for rule badly, they don't vote for them any more. For these men can't rule without the people's vote, do you understand? They have a president, too. Isn't that better than our system? Just think. Who are the Manchu? Perhaps once the Manchu were vigorous, when they rode into our land on their little horses, to defeat us. Today they are fat and stupid. Nothing but a machine on the verge of falling asunder, and afraid of it. Their fear costs our blood. Their life costs our blood. Their habits cost our blood. Do you know that each Manchu child newly born—be it even a servant's child if only of Manchu blood—receives a pension of so and so many tael, from the very first day? It's our money. Who pays the eunuchs, the officials, the luxuries of the palace? We. And they keep China in darkness. They keep us ignorant so that we won't be able to drive them out. They have stamped us with their brand—the pig-tail. Do you like wearing your pig-tail, the Manchu pig-tail which the Chinese never wore?"

"We in the South roll our pig-tails and put them under our hats," Sun Yat Sen said sleepily. "So they aren't seen."

"Still you wear pig-tails. What do you think?"

"I think . . ." Sun Yat Sen said hesitating. "You told me a name, Hwa Wee. Isn't it dangerous for this man if you talk about how he speaks and if you mention his name too?"

"He is dead," Yih Chong said hastily. "Nothing can harm him any more. The police arrested him and beheaded him in public. Many have been beheaded.

But many work on. My uncle in Honolulu sends much money to the secret organization "The Yellow Earth." Doesn't your brother send money?"

"I don't know," Sun Yat Sen said. "I don't think so."

"But you," Yih Chong whispered out of the darkness, "what do you think? Isn't it good to overthrow the Manchu? What do the people in your village talk?"

His voice, somehow, seemed to Sun Yat Sen as loathsome as the red eyes of the missionary. He wanted to shrink away.

"I don't know everything the people in my village say," he said. "My father too never spoke with me about such things. But I was always taught that the Manchu are our rulers by right and we should be glad under their exalted government. It isn't good for the people to rebel. The people must be ruled, otherwise we perish."

Yih Chong leaned forward.

"I'd like to talk with you more often," he said slowly. "I'll give you an address in Honolulu, come there from time to time. If you ask for me, someone will lead you to where I am. Perhaps you could find out who of your brother's acquaintances sends money to secret organizations in China. If you give me names, I will give you money. Honolulu is a gay spot. You could have a good time although you are very young."

Sun Yat Sen shivered slightly. He said in a small voice :

"I'll do as you say, Yih Chong."

THE laundryman Tuan Chee in Honolulu was a goodnatured obese little man who ate a lot and moved little. He adored sweet-sour pork. He didn't do dhobi work himself ; he had made a contract with Wang Chow, Li Sen, Wao Tan and Sung Meh all of whom were thin and shrivelled. They did the work. In exchange he permitted them to sleep in the basement of his house and gave them food—no sweet-sour pork.

One day Tuan Chee was sitting in front of his house, blinking in the sunshine. The gritting noise of the near harbour clang in his ears. Tuan Chee, tired of blinking, closed his eyes. But he opened them again when a small voice asked :

“Exalted elder gentleman, could you tell this unworthy being where he could find the Man from Si-an?”

Tuan Chee squinted apparently sleepily from under his heavy lids but his glance keenly slid over the boy who was standing in front of him.

The boy was without doubt a young Chinese from the South. His forehead, his brows, his eyes were those of a man ; his nose, his lips and his chin still

those of a child. Tuan Chee glanced rapidly left and right, then he rose slowly.

“Come,” he said curtly.

He led Sun Yat Sen through a room in which Wang Chow, Li Sen, Wao Tan and Sung Meh were washing clothes. Without interrupting their work, they glanced at the boy. Tuan Chee led him to his office—a bare room under the roofwork.

“Sit down,” he said. “Who are you?”

“The man from Si-an told me to tell you only that I had come on the same boat as he.”

“I don’t know any man from Si-an,” Tuan Chee murmured. The window of his office looked at a narrow crooked compound. Tuan Chee drew the curtain.

“I’m sorry I can’t do anything for you,” he said after sitting down again with an obese groan. “But I don’t know any man from Si-an. Perhaps I might remember if you tell me his name.”

“He asked me not to tell his name,” the boy said embarrassed. “He said it was sufficient if I asked for the man from Si-an.”

“Never mind. Tell me his name.”

“But I promised him not to do so.”

“In that case I can do nothing for you. If you know people who want their laundry done well and cheap, send them to me.”

He got up and Sun Yat Sen had to do likewise. He was very disappointed but he concealed his disappointment as he had concealed his excitement.

Tuan Chee, this time, did not lead him to the main door ; he took him to a small door which opened on the compound.

"You better get out through here," he said with a crooked smile, "through the next building."

Sun Yat Sen said a polite goodbye and entered the compound. He stopped for he saw no entrance whatsoever to the adjoining building. Instead, a window was being opened and a hand appeared, beckoning him.

The window was just a few inches over the ground level of the compound. The room behind it was completely dark. Sun Yat Sen was not able to see who was beckoning him but he could see that the hand reaching out of the window belonged to a Chinese. He approached the window with slow, hesitating steps.

"Come in through here," a voice whispered, in the hasty dialect of the South.

Sun Yat Sen tried to peep first into the room but it was impossible. He overcame his fear and stepped on the rotting wood of the window sill. The beckoning hand immediately closed round his ankle. He fell into the room but was gently caught in somebody's arms. The window was closed at once.

Sun Yat Sen saw in front of him the tired, twitching eyes of two haggard, hardworked Chinese; one was about fifty years of age, the other, although he could not be more than twenty, showed in the expression of his sunken face the utter exhaustion of a man a hundred years old. Sun Yat Sen's eyes, straining painfully to penetrate the darkness, adapted themselves by and by. He saw that the room was apparently the dwelling and at the same time the shop and working place of a poor tailor.

"I'll take him along," the younger Chinese said and took Sun Yat Sen's hand. The old man murmured consent and sitting down, held a ragged suit which he was repairing, near his shortsighted eyes. He worked in the dark, to save a candle.

The young Chinese led Sun Yat Sen to a dark corridor and from there through a small door on to the road, different from that in which Tuan Chee had been sitting in the sunshine.

On the road the tailor peeped round anxiously. But the narrow, crooked, smelling lane was void of people; he stepped hastily out, telling Sun Yat Sen to quicken his step.

Sun Yat Sen who had not been longer in Honolulu than two days, did not know all the streets, lanes and squares which he crossed till the tailor dragged him into a narrow, dilapidated building.

Ascending to the first floor, he knocked at a door in a strange distinct rhythm. Almost immediately distrustful eyes appeared at a spyhole in the door. Sun Yat Sen knew these eyes. The door was pushed open and Yih Chong in a gown of red yet shabby and ragged silk appeared.

"Oh, the boy from Tsui-heng," he drawled. "Do you have good news?"

The hoarse word died in his mouth and his cheesy, tuberculous face with the lacerated nose grew rigid in a distorted grimace of sweating fear. Sun Yat Sen and the tailor were pushed aside by someone behind them before Yih Chong was able to step back and slam the door. Strong nervy hands took hold of Yih Chong and the tailor who in no time were gagged and bound. Then they were pushed through the open

door into the room behind it. Sun Yat Sen followed, relieved.

There were two rooms in Yih Chong's flat, both bare except a few mats and rags on the floor, which was as sticky with filth as the walls. Now the rooms were threateningly filled with six sturdy, broad men from the South. One of them, with a red scar on his prominent chin, gave a laugh when he saw Yih Chong's revolver on a mat.

"Disorganization to the smallest detail," he said. "The secret agent opens the door without his pistol."

They threw Yih Chong and the tailor on the floor; they were whining behind their gags.

"Were you afraid we'd lose your trail?" the man with the scarred chin asked Sun Yat Sen. "We know the tricks of these people. When you did not return for a long time, we left two men in front of Tuan Chee's house and surrounded all buildings which possibly could serve as exit from his house. We saw you in the next road with this young man and followed you. Now, may we begin, friends?" he turned to the others.

"Yes, and I think we should finish quickly," a young man with a lean fanatic face and thin lips said.

"All right, take the gag out of the mouth of this young fellow."

The tailor, when he felt his gag removed, tried at once to shout for help but his voice only gave a weak scream when immediately a hand hit him squarely over the saddle of his nose; his weak eyes closed under the pain and he started to cry.

"You won't shout for help," the man with the scarred chin said quietly. "You will answer my ques-

tions or you are going to die. What is your name?"

The tailor, instead to answer, coughed convulsively.

"Quite possibly you are ill," the man with the scarred chin said. "But that wouldn't prevent me from torturing you till you tell me whatever I want to know. What is your name?"

"Wang," the man whispered.

"Your father's name?"

"Kong."

"Where are you from?"

"Amoy."

"What are you doing in Honolulu?"

"We are tailors, sir. Please, have mercy—we are very poor people....."

"Just answer my questions. When did you first meet this other man lying at your side?"

"Yesterday, sir."

"What is his name? Do you know his name?"

"No, sir."

"How did you meet him?"

"Sir, in the house adjoining ours there lives a rich man, Tuan Chee. He is very rich and lends money on interest. Sometimes my father and I, we fall very ill, we cough and spit blood and are in fever and cannot work. Sometimes, even if we are better, we have no work and then we starve. We asked Tuan Chee for a loan. He lent us quite a big amount, more than we had expected and he only charged us sixty per cent interest. He said: 'You see, I like to please you. For that you will sometimes do what I say, just to please me. If you don't, I shall ask my money back immediately and give you great trouble.' We bowed and

assured him we would go all out to please him. Two days ago he came to visit us and we were frightened. If a creditor calls on a debtor in person, he wants his money back. And we had no money just now. But Tuan Chee only asked ; 'Can you see from your little room the window of my office ?' We tried and said yes. He asked : 'Can you see whether the curtains of this window are drawn or not.' We could see that. He said : 'The curtains will not be drawn, day and night. It is your duty to watch this from dawn to dusk. Whenever it happened that I draw the curtains, you look out of your window to see whether a Chinese comes out through the backdoor of my house, he be old, young, man, woman or child. Beckon him, open your window for him to come in and lead him on to your road and then to another house, to a flat I will show you.' He showed us this flat and this man who now is lying beside me. Then Tuan Chee said : 'If you don't obey or talk even a word to somebody else about this matter. I shall ask my money back at once and arrange to have you thrown into prison.'

"Tuan Chee is a rich and powerful man. We were in great fear when he said this. Today we saw for the first time the curtains of his window being drawn. Shortly afterwards the boy who is with you, came into the compound. I beckoned him as Tuan Chee had ordered, made him come in and led him to this flat and this man who now is lying beside me. That is all I know. Please, have mercy and don't harm me. I am very poor and in great fear."

"We shall let you go, later." the man with the scarred chin said ; "now we have to gag you again."

He did so and then took the gag from Yih Chong's

pale lips. Yih Chong's eyes erred round, he whispered and whined.

"What do you want of me?" he whined. "I am one of you. Ask this boy, how I talked of the Manchu" His mottled, sunken face palpitated. "Don't kill me—I shall tell you everything—whatever you want. I can denounce many men in Honolulu who spy on you, I can. But let me go, let me go."

"Despicable as all police dogs," the man with the scarred face said quietly. "I am quite sure you will tell us everything you know. For if you don't—even you people have not yet invented the tortures we could inflict on you."

The man with the lacerated nose was sweating profusely.

"I know tortures," he screamed. "Do you want to teach me what tortures are?" He gave a laugh of despair. "I will tell you everything, then you will see what tortures are. I am not from Si-an and my name is not Yih Chong. I am from Tientsin. I was a student in Pekin. I happened to join a Revolutionary Circle. The police raided our meeting. Eight days I was lying without food in a prison cell in which there wasn't a beam of light. I was afraid I had become blind. When they unlocked the door and took me out, the sudden light pained my eyes even behind closed lids. A high official interrogated me for my family was well-known. He was very polite, he begged of me to see my mistake. The Manchu Dynasty was ruling for the good of China. My father, a loyal official, would be broken-hearted if he came to know of my crime which up to now had not been revealed to him: He asked me to tell him the names of all whom I suspected

of revolutionary tendencies. I refused. Now his behaviour changed, he shouted and threatened. I remained unshaken. Again he smiled and led me politely to another room. There the instruments of torture were kept. You want to teach me what tortures are? I have been under them, under all of them. I stood the wheel on which they stretched me till my bones tore from their joints. I stood the bamboo splinters under my finger nails. But then they fettered me with short chains on the floor and the handcuffs hanging from the ceiling. They turned a wheel and four walls studed with iron spikes closed slowly down on me. The spikes pierced my flesh, I thought to feel them in my intestines, in my lungs, in my kidneys—I was about to faint when the walls withdrew. But again they closed slowly down on me. I tried to commit suicide by swallowing my tongue. But I was not able to. Perhaps I would have stood the pains but I could not stand the fear of these slowly closing walls. I broke down and screamed names. A flood of names broke over my lips. The official noted them down, smiling. Then they took me back to jail.

"Again I was lying for eight days in the dark room. This time they gave me food. Then they took me again to the official. He praised me. 'It appears,' he said, 'that the names you told us were mostly correct. Those who bore these names, are dead. Some were strangled, others beheaded, some torn to pieces. others died under their different tortures; one, a high official, was—to avoid the publicity—poisoned in his home. You are now permitted to choose among these different methods of finding your death.'

I shivered.

You promised me my life, I pleaded.

He smiled.

'Perfectly true!' he said, 'but you have not yet agreed to our conditions.'

What conditions? I asked.

'We want more names.'

'I don't know any more,' I groaned. 'It is the truth, I don't know any more . . .'

'I am aware of this,' he said. 'But we decided to send you out to get hold of names. It is known that you belonged to a Revolutionary Circle and people assume for one reason or the other that you behaved bravely in prison. For some time now these secret organizations are growing and growing. They have arms and money which they receive from abroad. We wish to know the names of the Chinese abroad who assist these secret organizations. Most of them have still members of their families in China and we could let them know that their relatives in China will die if they proceed to assist the secret organizations. You will go to Honolulu. In the shortest possible time you will send me the names of these subjects of China who assist revolutionary organizations. But don't think that in Honolulu you are outside our grip. Wherever we wish to kill you, we can get hold of you. Nor would we hesitate to apprehend your honourable father and to kill him if you don't obey our orders.'

"He instructed me how I was to conduct myself. I agreed to everything. I was full of fear. I had stood up to two tortures but now I was sick with fear." Yih Chong coughed. "He gave me money, much money. He gave me Tuan Chee's address and addresses in

China to which I was to send my reports. He also told me the names of men who were already working for him in Honolulu."

"These names are . . . ?" the man with the scarred chin asked.

"U-Sung, We Huan Ken, Mao Nun."

"We almost might believe your story," the man with the scarred chin said. "You first double-cross us and then the others. By the way, how do you know we are Revolutionaries and not helpers of your Mandarin?"

"I know you," Yih Chong said. "You are Tang Peh. The official showed me your picture and gave me orders to watch you."

The man with the scarred chin gave a laugh.

"What is the name of that official?" he asked.

"I swear I don't know. He is tall and lean and has a swordscar on his left cheek."

"Wen-Fang," the man with the scarred chin murmured.

"What are you going to do with me?" Yih Chong asked, shivering. His face seemed blind, smothered under small red mottled patches. "I can help you a lot . . ."

"You will help me a lot," the man with the scarred chin said. "And we'll help you a lot. Now we have to ask this tailor a few things. Therefore we have to gag you again."

A man bent over Yih Chong and gagged him. In this moment Yih Chong seemed to realize what they were really out to do. Rearing up, he bit at the hand holding the gag. But it was too late. After gagging him, the man reached for a cloth, put it round Yih

Chong's throat and strangled him deftly and daintily.

The tailor began to tremble like a rippling snake. His eyes, going mad, squinted at Yih Chong's corpse. The dainty little man who had strangled Yih Chong knelt besides the tailor and strangled him too.

The men searched the rooms and the clothes of the dead without finding anything but some money in Yih Chong's gown. They went out of the house and dispersed at once on the road.

Sun Yat Sen was accompanying the man with the scarred chin.

"Well, Wen-Fang knows about me now," the man murmured. "And U-Sung, We-Huan Ken, Mao Nun? I don't think that Wen-Fang told this man the names of the people who really work for him. But we have to investigate . . . Well, Sun Yat Sen, little brave man, how are you? Give your brother my compliments."

Sun Yat Sen was walking quietly. His manly forehead frowned, his childish lips hung open. He was thinking hard.

"There is something I don't understand," he said slowly.

"If I can I'll explain."

"Yih Chong was strangled because he was a traitor. But why the tailor? A poor man who didn't know what he was really doing. He was indebted to Tuan Chee who forced him to do things which he did not understand even. I don't think we should strangle people like this. One should talk to him, make him understand, convince him. One should even help him against Tuan Chee. He was a very frightened man. He would never betray us, seeing we strangle men."

The man with the scarred chin smiled.

"You say 'we.' Indeed, you did us a great service but that doesn't mean that you have been accepted in our organization."

Sun Yat Sen looked to the ground. He was ashamed.

"I'll tell you why we killed the tailor," the man with the scarred chin said. "Even those who serve the machinery of oppression out of negligence or fear deserve death. Ignorance deserves death if it retards the revolution. You said yourself the tailor was a very frightened man. Cowards are of no use to us. There are men who say we should appeal to the masses. They are idiots. A small, strictly secret, brave circle of educated men, that's all. The masses are uneducated and cowardly. We might make use of them but we won't honour them by taking them into our confidence. Would you like to work as one with stupid coolies?"

"I don't know," Sun Yat Sen said hesitating.

"The most important reason for killing the tailor was that he saw our faces. You understand that?"

"What about Tuan Chee. The corpses will be found. Tuan Chee knows who they are. He saw me, he even knows I came on the same ship as Yih Chong. The tailor's father too saw me. It will be easy for the police to trace me, thereby tracing my brother, thereby tracing you . . ."

"This very minute Tuan Chee and the tailor's father have already been killed, my child. They won't be able to talk about you . . ."

"The workers in Tuan Chee's laundry saw me too."

"Are you afraid?"

"No," Sun Yat Sen said proudly.

"Good. A worker in Tuan Chee's laundry was in communication with us. We already suspected Tuan Chee to work for the Manchu's, but only through you we got proof. Tuan Chee's workers all belong to a secret village organization. They won't say anything. Any more doubts?"

"No. Do you communicate with all these secret organizations in China?"

"No. Only here, if we need some thing from another organization."

"I think all organizations should communicate with each other."

"Nonsense. How dangerous? One spy in one organization and all others are doomed too! Revolutionary circles must be strictly exclusive, work secretly, refuse any unnecessary connection. I tell you, a handful of independent determined men is best."

"Then how will the idea spread?"

The man with the scarred chin shook his head.

"The idea is nothing. Action is everything."

SUN YAT SEN, student of medicine, hastily walked through the streets of Shanghai. He was afraid to arrive late at his patient's bed. Five days ago they had called him for the first time to see the quiet, refined, nervous man from the North: a bullet had broken through two of his ribs and pierced the left lung. The wounded man smiled all the time.

"Wu Lien is dead," he said. "That's the important thing."

Sun Yat Sen trembled secretly every time he went there. It was preposterous that he, a mere student, should act as the surgeon in this case. But it was impossible to shift the wounded man from the hide-out they had found for him without exposing him to sure death. And the owner of the building where he was hidden, an easily frightened merchant, refused to call anybody but Sun Yat Sen whom he knew well. Perhaps he was right. There were many doctors who reported to the police what they heard from their patients. But Sun trembled at his responsibility.

Day and night he studied, read foreign text-books on operations, diseases and injuries of the lung. His

friends were angry ; he avoided meeting them, he didn't deliver the lectures he had promised at their secret conventions. He had given his word to write a little pamphlet for distribution, in which he was to show the necessity of revolt in a single town—then one could expect that other towns followed suit even if they were not yet organized. Sun Yat Sen did not write the pamphlet. And he didn't betray with one word why he had held himself aloof.

“Sun Yat Sen will finally desert us,” some whispered.

Before I have saved this life, Sun Yat Sen thought, I won't do anything else. If I am able to save this man, I might be able to save China.

He had forbidden his patient to talk. But the patient didn't care.

“I have lived my life,” he said. “I revenged my brother. Don't take trouble with me who is useless now. Don't take trouble with me.”

But then he detained Sun Yat Sen to tell him new details of his story.

“My mother had hardly been pregnant for seven months when I was born,” he said. “You know what that means : I was thin skinned, frightened, nervous. My parents who were rich, spoilt me in their tenderness. I received a good education. I admired and adored my elder brother who had been nine months in his mother's womb and who was strong and wild ; he mocked his teachers, climbed trees, fought with other boys. I was shy, even a coward. I didn't dare to climb trees. If somebody shouted at me, I cried at once. Sometimes I thought the bare branches of the wintry trees, the dark depth of the waters, the

terrifying endlessness of the sky were only here to hunt me, take hold of me, devour me. I fled to my brother. He laughed, boxed my ears, danced noisily round me. This noise drowned the dark threat of the world. With him, I wasn't afraid. Alone, I shivered. The nerves of my thin skin ached with fright. So many things were strange and unknown.

"We lived at Lou-Chow. One day my brother journeyed to Pekin to study. I trembled day and night; without my brother I felt as without skin. I wasn't sent to Pekin to study. I was too delicate.

"When my brother returned he hadn't learnt much. He had always been interested in agriculture and nothing else. Now he had failed in his examinations. My father was now old and feeble, otherwise he would have sent my brother back to Pekin to finish his studies. But now he was glad that a strong man was here to look after our estate.

"Yet I had learnt a lot. An old man had come to live with us, a famous *literarum* doctor who knew thousands of quotations by heart and himself had written a novel of twenty volumes. This man taught me to love the classics. I became absorbed in literature. Here I found adventures which I could have in my brain—which did not touch my skin. I lived with men of all centuries. I was intoxicated with the exquisite delicacies of a language which became more and more subtle, intricate, involved, exacting to the reader. Without sitting for the examinations I became quite one of the *literati*. I was not able to write novels. But soon I too knew thousands of quotations by heart and could talk of all the works of our classic literature.

"My parents were proud. At least there was one learned man in the family.

"My brother tried to persuade me to go to Pekin and sit for the examinations. I refused; the thought of a strange city, of a journey like that made me shudder, I was even loath to leave the room, full of books, in which I lived.

"My brother was considerate. He let me alone with my hobbies. While he worked like a farmer, he allowed me money to buy rare books, antiques, carvings, exquisite porcelaine. In the evenings he loved to come to my room, to listen to my talk of literature. He was pleased to hear the exalted quotations from our classics, the pretty and heroic verses of our poets. What he did not understand, I tried to explain.

"But there was a matter which sometimes caused him to quarrel with me. My brother had returned from Pekin with a store of revolutionary ideas. To my mind, politics was dirty business unworthy of *literati* or poets. A revolutionary, I thought, was a nasty unclean man. I bowed piously before the well-knit, clear and glorious hierarchy which held our country together. This hierarchy was something like my books, my clear and well-knit works of art. The person of the Emperor, the Son of the Heavens, was sacrosanct. I didn't care whether he was a Ming or Manchu. He was the personification of an idea which lifted the Emperor, Ming or Manchu, high above us and made him an equal of the sun. Sometimes there were upheavals. The Manchus had overthrown the Ming. That had been unclean. But centuries filtered the uncleanness. Now the

Manchu dynasty were ruling. No new upheavals, no new uncleanness! The Manchu Emperor, over-refined, mellowly faded as my books, precious as my porcelaine, was throning over us, personification of a hierarchy that gave us security and leisure.

"Whenever I spoke like that, my brother pressed his fists against his temples and once he was so overcome with emotion that he insulted me, a thing he never had done. He said I was an imbecile.

'I'd like to stuff your room with manure,' he exclaimed, 'to make you understand how real life smells. Hierarchy, indeed. A gang of gluttons above our heads.'

"When he talked like that, I went out of the room. These words were too low and common for the study of one of the *literati*.

"The Governor of our province, Wu Lien, was an obese man who hated my brother. Now I come to think that my brother all the time was involved in conspiracies. Beggars came to our door, peeped round and entered without my brother throwing them out. He was often absent on journeys. Sometimes, at night, I thought to hear the steps and voices of many men. But my frail body needs much sleep. Sometimes I sleep for fourteen or fifteen hours at a stretch and almost always I sleep so greedily, my body refuses to be disturbed by anything. Whenever I heard steps and voices by night, I thought I was dreaming and slept on. Till one day soldiers and police broke into our house. The Governor followed in person. My brother tried to resist but was overcome. The rough hands of the policemen gripped me too. At me, the Governor laughed.

‘This dreamer is not dangerous,’ he said, ‘but this dog,’ he scowled at my brother, ‘this turtle egg, he is a bandit and murderer.’

“They searched the house and found weapons. A revolutionary whom they had apprehended, had given my brother away. My brother was condemned to die, for being a bandit and for high treason. I wrote a petition which contained more than two hundred quotations. But he was publicly beheaded. They confiscated our estate and entire fortune, even my books, works of art, porcelaine. The Governor took that for himself. They hunted me from the house in which I had lived with my brother, happily, for forty years.”

He coughed. Reddish foam stood on his lips.

“You must not speak,” Sun Yat Sen pleaded

The patient smiled.

“Let me talk, my dear young physician. It gives me joy. Don’t leave me. If you go away, I still shall talk to myself. You remind me of my brother. He too had bushy brows. Listen, do you know what I did after having been driven from my home? I decided to kill the Governor.

“I was, of course, more miserable. I was torn by shame, pain, hunger, rage and fear.

“I was ashamed of my brother, ashamed of the way he met his death. I was mad with chagrin. I was hungry and cold. Friends of my brother gave me shelter here and there but I sank down to the level of a beggar, a tramp, I, the man of letters, the art collector. The nails of my little fingers broke. I was unwashed, filthy. But the most terrible of all was fear.

"When I see your bushy brows which resemble those of my brother, I don't think you know cowardice. It is horrible. I was afraid of everything. I and my family, we had lost our face. I was afraid of the gossip of people, of their glances. I trembled with fear of death. It was still possible that the Governor decided to apprehend me and make me share my brother's fate even if I hadn't done anything. I trembled with fear of the future. What was to become of me if I went on living? A beggar but disabled to beg, on account of his education. One who whines before the doors, telling he was rich once. In my good times I shivered at a hard word, a frowning forehead, at a leaf suddenly rustling over the road in a gust of wind. Now I would tramp the streets in bare, bleeding feet, sleep in the dark shadows of the undergrowth, beg crumbs from hostile people, be looked at by bearded, stinking, toothless beggars as one of them. Every night I dreamt of these bearded faces approaching me, sniffing, devouring me; of evil eyes; of horrid leaf shadows. I did not want to submerge in the masses of the starving.

"I swear it was not courage, it was cowardice that made me tell to my brother's friends my resolve to kill the Governor. It meant that they gave me money to assist me, that I didn't need to go hungry, that they looked upon me as a hero and did everything for me. But it also meant that they energetically took all steps to prepare the attentat and to find out the best opportunity to carry it out.

"The Governor was watched over by his body-guards like a priceless pearl in the eye of a Buddha statue. But at last he was called to Pekin for a report,

and it was known that whenever he was in Pekin, he frequented a certain tea house.

"They gave me new clothes, more money. I travelled to Pekin. The journey was torture. I knew I was going to commit murder. This thought alone paralysed me. Again and again I imagined my shot failing its target, or how I was prevented from shooting at all and disarmed. Cold sweat came out of my pores. How on earth could I hit at all, I, who had never fired a shot in my life. How was I to find my way in Pekin, a strange, terrifying city. How would I behave in the tea house not to attract suspicion? Never in my life had I touched a woman; I had detested them.

"I was so tortured with fear that I resolved not to go to Pekin. I would disappear into the interior or even abroad. Then I remembered that my brother's friends had assured me I wouldn't be alone on the journey. They had selected somebody to shadow me and help me, if necessary. I even didn't know who it was. Perhaps he had received orders to shoot me should I try to flee. Perhaps he had received orders to shoot me after I had killed the Governor. For more than an hour I thought of getting through to the Dowager Empress, to fall at her feet, to confess everything. I was mad with fear.

"My brother's friends had given me an address in Pekin where I was to stay. But there I would be more or less a prisoner. I didn't go there but stayed at a cheap inn. I decided to live as long as possible on the money they had given me and then to commit suicide.

"I trembled in my tiny filthy room. I was afraid

of the Governor, of my brother's friends, of the shadows and voices of the strangers who passed my room. I was lying on my filthy mattress and sobbed.

"On the second day I resolved to go to the tea house. If I had to commit suicide why shouldn't I kill the Governor first. The thought appealed to me. In that case I didn't cheat my brother's friends, I only cheated the hangman.

"When I entered the tea house, the enormously fat proprietor came towards me, salaaming and asking for my desire. I tried to look superior but my stomach flopped. I sank sweating on a stool. They put tea and rice wine in front of me. I detest rice wine. If I see a drunkard, I feel bodily ill. In this tea house there were almost only drunkards.

"Ten or twelve girls paraded in front of me. None of them was more than twelve years of age ; their faces were round and covered with make-up. Their lips were scarlet, their brows well inked. Their faces gave a pretty, white, artistic picture ; and they sang in agreeable voices verses of poets I loved. I wanted to answer with a verse but my voice failed me, cowardice strangled me.

"One of the girls I liked. She was the youngest and twittered as a swallow. When she saw me staring at her, she came near me, and took me by the hand. Without will or mind I got up. She led me over wooden stairs to the first floor, to her room. The fat tea house owner shouted for money. I flung a few silver coins down. He bowed. The girl dragged me into her room.

"There was a couch on which she threw herself, looking at me expectantly. Gold and silver bangles

jingled on her wrists. I didn't know what to say. I had never touched a woman and I didn't know what to do. My heart palpitated in deadly fear. In desperation of my ignorance and still more of my fear I stumbled over the girl like a wild beast.

"This very minute I heard outside a well-known voice, the voice of the Governor. I startled back from the girl after a moment that had shown me that if my brain and perhaps my heart desired her, my body remained mute. The Governor shouted :

'Where is Cherry Blossom ? Where is the new jewel ? I want to see her.'

"I was dying with fear he might enter this room and find me. I staggered and babbled. The girl looked at me, bewildered. But the Governor went on, on the corridor. And now I was gripped by another, stronger fear.

"There must be different kinds of fear. I remember I was mortified at the thought of having to shoot at him. But I was more mortified at the thought of what would happen if I did not shoot him. I ran on to the corridor. He heard me and turned.

"I yelled, but not with rage—with fear ; it wasn't craving for revenge ; it was fear that made me dance from one foot on the other like one demented, that made my eyes pop out and distorted my twitching lips. Everything, everything to end this torment. I pulled the revolver which the friends of my brother had given me, out of my wide sleeve.

"The Governor, red over his face, rushed at me. That made me howl with fear. I shot and he crumpled up. I hadn't missed him.

"Now there was the fear of being taken prisoner.

Blindly shooting around, I fled. I ran through a few lanes: suddenly a hand gripped me and dragged me into a doorway. My brother's friend had watched and prepared everything. I was wounded but they had no time to attend to that. In a box they smuggled me aboard a ship that sailed for Shanghai. Here they smuggled me in a box ashore and to this hide-out.

"Now, listen to this. I am wounded, I am going to die. I am not afraid any more. Not afraid of death. My brother's friends say I am a hero. Yet whatever I did, I did out of fear."

"Never mind," Sun Yat Sen said. "Motives are not as important as the deeds and their consequences. Now please, promise me, don't talk any more."

"Don't be afraid, my dear young healer. I am very tired now. But I had to tell you of my fear. Your brows and eyes are like those of my brother."

As he closed his eyes, he said :

"Don't try to save me. If I live, fear will come back, fear of everything. If I die now, they will think of me as a man. If I live on, one day, for some ridiculous reason, it will be revealed that I am a nervous coward. Don't try to save me, my dear young physician."

"THERE are two questions," Dr. Sun Yat Sen said, "Organization and money. The money question is theoretically simple, practically difficult. Collections, forced contributions, expropriations. The question of organization is both theoretically and practically difficult. There are innumerable secret organizations, with not quite clarified aims, bickering among themselves. Very few have a conception of the national idea. The secret organizations of the farmers merely want to get rid of taxes and distribute the soil. Of the secret organizations of the middle classes, some want democracy, some the return of the Ming, some would retain the Manchu if they would only concede provincial assemblies and a parliament. Our task is: first step—to contact all secret organizations. Second step: unite them organizationally under strict leadership. That doesn't mean to make them one organization. While remaining different organizations, they should receive directives and instructions from a committee outside all of them. Third step: to give them the national idea. We don't fight for the time being for new distribution of the land. We fight to rid China

from being exploited by foreigners and their agents—the Manchu dynasty. The dynasty is agent of the foreigners partly voluntarily, partly on account of its weakness. All this leads to the fourth step: Revolution.

“Compromises with the Manchu-clique will never be effective. We have to revolt, at a time when Government is sufficiently weakened. Is this time ripe? Let us analyse.

“In 1644 the Ming Government called the Manchu, Tartar horsemen, into the country to help them to repress a revolt. They repressed the revolt but also overthrew the Ming and usurped the throne. In the face of prejudiced views I should explain that they ruled wisely for quite a time. Then they degenerated to a greedy and cruel machinery of force. Since beginning of this century they are unable to resist the power of the foreigners. Tao Kuan at least tried, when in 1839 Lin Tse Lsu destroyed the opium stocks in Canton. But the result was a war which ended with the cession of Hongkong to the British. This war showed how fearfully dilapidated our military organization was. We had slept on our bows and arrows while the foreigners had manufactured guns. When in 1850 the Taiping revolt flared up, it was undoubtedly inspired by Christian ideas; but I think it was not less inspired by the clearly perceptible weakness of Government. Was Government capable of suppressing this revolt? No. For ten years they battled without results. Foreign money, foreign arms, foreign troops under Gordon, defeated the revolt which had exhausted Government. 1857, another defeat by the British, 1876 Japan’s preposterous move to conclude

a treaty with Korea and recognize Korea's independence. 1879 the shameful treaty at Livadia, with Russia. 1882 France's move to annex Annam. There is not one successful step taken by this Government in its dealing with foreigners. Slowness, corruption, terror and reaction — a disintegrating machinery. Without doubt. But is this machinery so far disintegrated that today a revolt has a chance of success?"

"Yes," a small, narrow-chested young man, sitting among the attentively listening friends, shouted. "certainly."

"No," Sun Yat Sen said slowly. "I don't think so. If we just had lost a war—yes."

"What? You wish China to lose a war?" the narrow-chested young man exclaimed, blushing.

"I wish the Manchu to lose a war," Sun Yat Sen said. "If we want to succeed, it is necessary to weaken the system. And this is done best by a lost war. A defeat in war exhausts the Government machinery financially, takes away its security, the confidence of the masses in it. A lost war is the best time to start a revolution. We don't know when China will have to wage war again. My personal view is that the growing friction with Japan might lead to it. We have to be prepared for this time. Our organization must be built up and well-knit, funds and arms must have been collected....."

"Better to vanquish the enemy first and then Government," the young man shouted.

Sun Yat Sen smiled.

"A successful war strengthens Government. We must not wish for victory....."

"Traitor."

"No, politician. We must prepare. I think war will come. I have decided to concentrate the organization of the secret federations and the raising of money in my own hands. For this reason—and this was what I wanted to tell you today—I shall cease to work as M.D. I shall submerge in the giant body of sick China to cure it with a bloody operation....."

"What? You want to drop your profession?"

"On the contrary, I want to take up my profession. What you call my profession takes too much of my time and my energy. A physician is not master of himself. Patients come to him, patients call him to their homes. Their illness does not ask whether he has time or not. I have to choose and I select the profession of a revolutionary organizer. We are a small circle. The masses think it impossible to overthrow the Manchu. I shall do it. That's all."

The narrow-chested young man jumped up and shouted in a treble:

"Death to the Manchu, these barbarians of a tribe which four hundred years ago could not yet write their own language."

Sun Yat Sen smiled again.

"You are one of the *literati*," he mocked. "Learn from the foreigners, learn even from the Manchu. These barbarians who four hundred years ago could not write their own language, rule since two hundred and fifty years the people with the most ancient civilization on earth—by force. My friends, let us learn force, and organize force."

JEN, the coolie, slept in a wall; there was a damaged spot in it, a small hollow just big enough to receive the bent body of the coolie. The advantages of it were enormous. The recess was almost four feet over the ground. It protected from sudden torrents. It also protected from being attacked, while asleep, by hungry stray dogs or prowling pigs.

When as a child, lying on his back, his thin arms outstretched and his lips open, he had slept on the ground, he had suddenly woken up, a pig over him, mad with hunger, which already had bitten off his nose. Since then Jen was terrified to the point of shivering spasms, to sleep on the ground. His father, quite desperate about this fad, had given him a thrashing. So Jen had run away.

He was then seven years old. He helped the members of the porters' guild in the docks to carry loads, at small thefts and robberies. For that they gave him rice and permitted him to sleep on high bales and boxes. He was happy. But then the incident with Li happened.

Li did not belong to the guild of the porters. He belonged to the guild of the cobblers. Jen did not know why Li suddenly tried to carry loads. Probably

because he was hungry, for his master had on account of a little larceny chucked him out. Jen only knew that one day just when he was helping the coolie Tao to distribute his load evenly on his bent back, a bearded, trembling man with deepset watery eyes appeared. He beckoned Jen in a secretive manner, and Jen who had finished with Tao ran towards him. The stranger whispered that he was called Li and a member of the porters' guild, but in another town. He would like to work here.

Just then a foreigner, a longnosed yellow-haired being passed carrying a small suitcase and heading for a boat. Li rushed to him and took his suitcase. The foreigner didn't mind. Without doubt he thought Li belonged to the porters' guild and therefore everything was quite in order. But the other coolies saw this, and came running. One shouted :

"I know this man. He belongs to the guild of the cobblers."

They attacked Li and took the suitcase from him. One of them carried it behind the foreigner who obviously didn't care which porter was serving him.

The others beat Li till he was lying on the ground, coughing blood. Then they beat Jen ; they had seen him whisper with Li and thought he was trying to assist strangers to infiltrate into their guild. Jen screamed and sobbed but they didn't care. They hit the bit of nose that was left to him and was very sensitive, being mostly raw flesh. Then they hunted him out of the docks. Once he tried to creep back but they threw stones at him.

Now he did not know where to sleep. He tried successively to work for a baker, a pedlar of

fumigators and incense, a copper-smith. They all were used to their workers sleeping on the ground. Jen tried every conceivable trick. He tried to sleep on the oven, on big upturned brass cauldrons, on the cart of a potter for whom he worked later. It was a trembling, night for night hunt to get a raised place to sleep on. But people became suspicious because he didn't dare to sleep on the ground and they thought that there was something fishy about this. So nobody kept him on for long. Later he did coolie work in the town and one day discovered the hollow in the wall. Since then he felt safe. From dawn to dusk he squatted in the bazaar, with his basket and cloth, waiting to carry loads which came his way.

At night he slept, doubled up, in the recess in the wall.

One night a police patrol dragged him out of the Wall. They flashed their lantern in his face and then kicked him and drove him away. And they shouted that he was not permitted to sleep in this wall.

For one night he slept on the roof of a shed. But the roof was oblique, he fell down and hurt himself. The next night he spent squatting on a little earth hill, but he didn't dare to sleep. In the third night he sneaked to his wall and crept into the hollow. He slept badly, being afraid of the police patrol. But they didn't come again and he could keep on sleeping in the recess.

One day strange unrest befell Canton. The people in the bazaar, where Jen was squatting, murmured and whispered. Suddenly an unknown lean man, looking like a student or otherwise son of the burglars, climbed on to the roof of a shed.

"Chinese," he shouted. "Down with the Manchu who have gagged us for centuries. Down with the uncouth, uncivilized barbarians who dare to rule over us, a people of ancient civilization. Down with the foreigners who exploit our country and tear pieces out of her to satisfy their robber appetite....."

To Jen these words didn't convey any meaning at all. But he ran like all others, to listen to the man on the shed.

"We are a nation," he shouted, "a great nation....."

Jen couldn't understand a bit what he wanted. The man proceeded to shout :

"The revolution is here. Down with the Manchu. Follow us, citizens, students, farmers, coolies. The Manchu sleep on their golden beds while our country goes to the dogs. They sleep....."

Jen felt an aching hatred in his heart. There were people who slept on golden beds. The speaker screamed :

"Hunt them out of their golden beds, hunt them out of their palaces. Cheers for the national idea. Cheers for China."

He jumped from the roof of the shed and ran along. They could hear the sound of shooting from afar. Jen, pressing his basket and cloth anxiously to his hip ran after the speaker.

"Heh," he shouted, "where are those golden beds? I'll throw those men from their golden beds. I will. I want to sleep somewhere high, on a bed or on stairs even....."

The student turned with wild eyes. What did this coolie talk about? Police came running from the

other side. The student was no coward, but he wanted to survive the Revolution, he fled in another direction. The coolie ran after him.

"Somewhere high up," he shouted, "I want to sleep somewhere high up."

Police came out of another street too. At this moment rifles started to fire from the roofs. The police took cover and returned the fire. The student, in the arch of both fires, drummed with his fists at the door of a house. Nobody opened. Suddenly the coolie was at his side.

"I'll help you," he said. "You understand? It needn't be a bed. Somewhere high up."

His large heavy foot smashed the door out of its hinges. The student who had been leaning on it with his chest, fell into the house. He jumped up and ran upstairs. A frightened face appeared for a moment in the darkness of the upper floor.

The student climbed cautiously on to the roof. Turning, he saw that the coolie followed. On the roof, covered behind chimneys and parapets, the revolutionary snipers were squatting. The student took hold of the rifle of a man who was lying dead, with open mouth and starry eyes, hit by a police bullet.

"On a roof even," the coolie said. He startled, for suddenly from behind a chimney a man rolled to his feet, hit in the temple. The rifle slid off his hands and down the roof. Jen caught it. He squatted down at the side of the student.

"I help you," he said. "But I don't know how to handle this thing."

Watching the student, he put the rifle on his

shoulder and he succeeded, without taking aim, to fire a shot on the street.

Then he perceived a strange whirl in the air. Something hit him with an impact that made him fly up.

Something sweet gurgled up his throat, everything turned round and round. He felt horrible fear of falling down the roof. Perhaps a pig was down there. He flung his arms up to catch hold of the roof but there, he was already toppling down.

He fell among the advancing police. They trampled over him. His body reared and remained in a strangely cramped position on the ground as if he tried with all his strength to rise. Jen's dimming eyes saw endless rows of pigs coming towards him, he was drowned in supreme fear, he wanted to get up....not to go to sleep....not to go to sleep....on the groundon the ground....on which he was dying.

The shooting went on. Primitive home-made bombs, flung from the roofs, exploded among the police and soldiers.

Sun Yat Sen was sitting at his desk in his hide-out. He was conscious of being the head. He had to think, not to feel, not to move. On his brows, on his broad forehead rested the responsibility for the revolt. He gave orders.

The time had been well chosen. A year ago—1894—the war with Japan in Formosa had shown China's feebleness. Formosa had fallen to Japan. Wrath, scorn, distrust of the Manchu Government was being felt everywhere. Sun Yat Sen foretold this; he acted according to his prophecy.

The revolt had to be organized. Money and arms were ready. The contact between the different secret organizations had become closer. The place of the revolt had to be chosen. Sun Yat Sen selected Canton.

Restless and stubborn city of the South, breathing sea air, eternal source of unrest, of open or secret resistance against the hateful Government from the North, almost opposite the island of Formosa and only too well aware of the pitiable failure of the Chinese troops, Canton was the city for revolt. And Sun knew this city well, the whole district which was his home district: Kwantung.

One of his friends, Lao, a worrying, always doubting man, had said :

“It isn’t good if the revolt flares up at one place only. It should flare up all over the country. That would confuse Government and lead to success. If we strike at one spot only, Government will concentrate all their forces against us and we shall be annihilated.”

Sun Yat Sen thought this over. Then he said :

“We are not able to organize revolts all over the country. But we don’t want to wait any longer. A revolt is a message, the clearest message of Revolution. We select a city from where we send our message—Canton. In Canton it won’t be difficult to organize the revolt. When it flares up—everywhere in China they will understand the message from Canton. Government won’t have time to concentrate all their forces against us. China will answer our message : with revolt everywhere. As we cannot organize the revolt of the country, let’s start with the revolt of one

city. That is the call, the deed, the example which will have quicker effect than organization. The other centres of revolt will organize themselves. I don't say we shouldn't send friends everywhere to take charge of the revolts to be expected and lead them. You, Lao, for instance—where would you like to go?"

"Nowhere. What's the use? A revolt has to be organized in advance and planned to the last detail, otherwise it will be squashed."

"Allright. Remain in Canton to help me. But remember: one must not always think in military terms. From a tactical point of view you are right. But there is the idea. The idea is powerful. I accuse you of underestimating the appeal of our national idea. There is the mighty beginning—the message from Canton will be understood everywhere."

"And if not? If Canton remains isolated? If the revolt collapses?"

"I don't believe in this possibility. But—spoken hypothetically—even an unsuccessful revolt may be a great step of progress. What does it prove? That the people are dissatisfied, that Government rule only by terror. A squashed revolt is better than no revolt at all. It may initiate a chain of revolts which ultimately leads to victory."

"Or it may retard progress for decades when it is unprepared and rashly undertaken," Lao said, tormented.

"I confess that's true. But, once again, you underestimate the appeal of the national idea."

"I'm afraid the people don't understand anything of the national idea."

"Who are the people?"

"The farmers. The coolies. The beggars."

"We promised the peasants redistribution of landed property. Not as thorough as the Taiping schemed, but still redistribution. The peasants are the only ones who count. Coolies? Beggars? What to do with them? The strong, educated middle classes must lead. Coolies and beggars are welcome if they want to fight on our side. They will not be forgotten in national China. Above all, remember, there is the national idea."

Lao didn't dare to answer but his face expressed worried doubt.

Sun Yat Sen was sitting at his desk in his hide-out and received message after message. The news was bad. Police and soldiers were pro-Government. The revolt remained isolated in Canton.

Lao entered the room. He came slowly, his face was smeared with blood, his eyes half-closed and he pressed his right hand against his hip.

"We have lost, Sun Yat Sen," he said, almost inaudibly. "Our men are killed or in full flight. You too will have to flee. The revolt was ill prepared, there was a wrong approach, mistakes.....You will have to flee. Go now. You have to do it again."

He fell down. Sun Yat Sen went over to him, examined his body with quick, skilful hands. Lao wasn't mortally wounded, he had been shot in the hip and his temple was only grazed.

"Flee," he whispered. "Flee and later return." His face was bitter. "You said there was no possibility of this revolt being unsuccessful....."

The noise of shooting came nearer. A rifle-butt crashed against the door of the house.

Sun Yat Sen wanted to lift Lao up and carry him through the door. Lao resisted.

"I don't want," he said. "This is a romantic gesture. I would only endanger your escape. And you are the one who must escape."

Sun Yat Sen put him gently down and went. The hide-out had been selected with care; there was an underground way of escape.

Sun Yat Sen's staff—yong men, depressed and darkly looking—followed. They succeeded in reaching the ship that was in the harbour ready to take them away.

"WE'LL see, we'll see," Yuan Shi Kai said friendly. "You are possibly right in saying that the tendency of the provinces to autonomous provincial assemblies becomes more and more obvious. I said, possibly. And your opinion that moderate reforms would do much to prevent eventual dissatisfaction here and the damnable agitation from abroad—by the way, did you receive new reports about the activities of this man Sun Yat Sen?—is well worth to be considered. I said considered. And, of course, if it is the wish of the Son of the Heavens himself. . . ." He smiled ingratiatingly.

"It is the definite wish of the Son of the Heavens," the other man confirmed. "It is also the desire of quite a few ministers. We hope to win the support of your Excellency."

Yuan Shi Kai made a gesture which was neither affirming nor repudiating.

"Quite," he said.

Yuan Shi Kai was a man of the North, from Hsiang Chen in Honan. He was fat and heavy. His face was round as a ball, with tiny yet quick eyes. He was thirty-nine years old, but looked like a man of fifty.

In 1883 when he was twenty-four, he had already been appointed Director General of Trade and Commerce in Chosen, a year later he had been made Garrison Commandant in Chosen. He remained at this post for ten years, till the Chinese-Japanese war. Now, at thirty-nine, he was one of the most intimate advisers of the Dowager Empress and one of the most important counsellors of the young Emperor.

Yuan Shi Kai got up. His legs bent under the burden of his fat. His visitor jumped up and bowed.

"Did your Excellency hear any news of Li Hung-Chan?" he asked.

"Li Hung-Chan is very well indeed, thank you."

Yuan Shi Kai made a grimace which could also be taken for a smile.

Li Hung-Chan was the man who, with Gordon, had quelled the Taiping revolt: after Tung-Chi's death he had enthroned the five year old boy Kwang Su, making himself the real ruler of the country. China's defeat in the war with Japan had undermined his prestige. After the signing of the peace treaty he had gone abroad, to Europe and the United States of America. The personality of the sixty-five years old man from Nganhui smothered Yuan Shi Kai. He would have liked to strangle his visitor for recalling the hated name but he forced a smile. It wasn't difficult. The fat layer of his face had run to a permanent smile.

"We shall consider the case," Yuan Shi Kai said, "if possible, favourably. I said, if possible."

The visitor bowed again, smiled and withdrew.

The rather oppressing meeting took place in almost

complete darkness. The four ministers who were inclined to reforms had entered the palace of the Son of the Heavens, ostensibly to report on certain demonstrations hostile to foreigners by the lower classes of the population. The Emperor had taken care for the removal of all possible spies. The hall was hardly lit. The faces of the ministers were anxious. Only Yuan Shi Kai smiled.

The Emperor was sitting stiffly upright at the beginning of the discussion. But he was too weak to remain in this pose. Soon he slid back and his mouth opened with strain and fatigue.

The Son of the Heavens was a young man, narrow-chested, with a pale face of very faded yellow. The almost entire lack of brows and his uncertainly blinking myopic eyes gave him an expression of cowardice. Yet he was going to do a most courageous thing—in the face of all open or hinted threats of the Dowager Empress and her all-powerful clique.

"Will you please deliver your report," he said to Yuan Shi Kai, with a feeble gesture of gracious invitation.

Yuan Shi Kai bowed deeply, smiling at the ministers.

"Your Majesty," he said, "the view that reforms of the Administration are not to be avoided any longer, is expressed in all parts of the country. Since the beginning of this century China suffered extremely serious setbacks in her foreign policy, which gave occasion to unrest in the country. The people are far from blaming the exalted dynasty but they attach a certain measure of blame to the authoritarian government machinery which indeed has become rather slow

moving and—it has to be said—corrupt. The reason for the unsuccessful conclusion of the last wars was the fact that our Army was far from modernised, which again was caused by the financial disorder of the state. This financial chaos is, according to the opinion of those present, also a result of the somewhat antiquated government machinery. The people jib at paying taxes the use of which by the Governors is a thing one can only hint at. Experience in the Western countries teaches that—paradox as it may sound—a certain measure of freedom given to the populace results in better tax contribution. The reason for this may not only be that citizens seem quite inclined to contribute to an administration which is fully or partly controlled by them, but also that a certain freedom in the country seems to tend to enhance the prosperity of the population. We understand that the Exalted Son of the Heavens in his brilliant foresight does not regard these ideas as objectionable and punishable.....”

“I am in favour of the Western ideas,” the Son of the Heavens said, tired. “I want to see my people happy. I want that the Manchu dynasty remain in power. My education taught me and my own thoughts confirmed that revolutions flare up when the rulers stubbornly and blindly refuse necessary reforms. This and the reforms to be adopted—a not too far reaching democratisation of the administration—are quite clear to my mind. What is not clear and what I want to hear you about is how we can overcome the resistance of the Dowager Empress and her clique against every kind of reform—or, with one word: how I can at last get rid of the unbearable and meddlesome guardianship

—as they call their interference—of the Dowager Empress."

The ministers breathed hard, terrified. The Son of the Heavens looked at them, jerking his head nervously from one to the other. Then he shrank back again and closed his eyes. The ministers didn't dare to glance at each other. Yuan Shi Kai got up.

"There are many ways," he said slowly. "His Majesty the Emperor, the Son of the Heavens, has to guard his right even against the Dowager Empress. If the fact that the Dowager Empress refuses to listen to political logic, might result in the omission of necessary reforms—which would seriously endanger the realm, Government and Dynasty, then the angle under which it should be looked at is obviously this: to endanger deliberately the Rule of the Emperor borders on high treason—or is rather high treason. Vigilant guardians of state could well demand that those guilty of high treason be not only opposed but punished—in the manner high treason is punished."

The Son of the Heavens was still sitting with closed eyes. His thin lower lip trembled. The ministers all cramped their hands and stared with panicky eyes at the tips of their shoes.

"Good," the Son of the Heavens said out of the darkness, "good."

Then only he opened his eyes.

Two days after the meeting in the Emperor's palace, Yuan Shi Kai asked for and was graciously granted an urgent audience with the Dowager Empress. He told her that participating at a meeting of the young Emperor with certain ministers he had learnt that the Son of the Heavens had decided to

carry out most ruinous Western reforms in China—after having the Dowager Empress and her followers arrested and executed. His sense of duty as a loyal Chinese urged him to warn the Dowager Empress. According to his opinion, the exalted Son of the Heavens was showing signs of mental depression and certain ministers made use of the most deplorable deterioration of his mind to carry out their own criminal revolutionary schemes.

The Dowager Empress, tiny, frail, with a greedy chin and hard eyes, expressed her gratitude in a smile of her hoary yet unwrinkled and tight face. Yuan Shi Kai assured her of being always at her service. The palace clique—eunuchs, princes, hardboiled and in their narrowmindedness purposive reactionaries—gathered their forces surprisingly quickly. The ministers had to flee, the Emperor was kept prisoner in a part of the palace and slowly, by stages, poisoned.

"Excellency," the Dowager Empress said to Yuan Shi Kai, "I expect your brilliant brain will also find means to annihilate the revolutionaries who try to corrupt our country from abroad."

Sun Yat Sen coughed slightly when he stepped out of the doorway. Soot was sweeping over the roads, one had to grope one's way along the facades of the buildings. Street lanterns were lit but the London fog washed round them, devouring their light.

"In Pekin too most people are coughing," Sun Yat Sen thought. "Yet there are dust storms, not fog."

He paced cautiously along. He had come to London with the same purpose as to all other cities he

toured : Tokyo, New York, Paris, Berlin—to convince those in power in Europe and America that the Manchu dynasty was ruinous for China, that a flourishing China, a democratic China would be a blessing for all other countries. There was on the back of his mind the knowledge that the vested interests in Europe and America were rather inclined to keep China feeble. But he had to ignore this, he had to try and make them understand that democratic, national China would still admit the trade of all nations and be a better market than the impoverished China of the Manchu dynasty.

He had to organize the Chinese abroad : and from abroad the Chinese at Home. He had to create a Party instead of the dispersed, bickering secret organizations. He had to analyze the political situation and to weigh the chances for another revolution. And he had to collect money, to collect, barter, beg, blackmail : money, money, money—for arms and organizations.

Sun Yat Sen, his head lowered like an aggressive bull, groped through the fog. The next revolution ? A reactionary tide was surging over China. Sun Yat Sen had been ready to collaborate with an Emperor who was in favour of reforms. He watched the goal, not the means. He had enumerated his demands in a memorandum.

The Emperor who favoured reforms had been removed. Yuan Shi Kai held the reins. The darkly, clumsy resistance of the needy people had deftly been diverted through an often used safety valve : hatred of all foreigners. This reactionary slogan appealed to ignorant minds, and was most dangerous for bankrupt, weak, undisciplined China confronted by the modern arms of the foreign powers.

The fog was quite a nuisance. Sun Yat Sen was in a hurry but there seemed to be no vehicle which he could stop. He was hardly able to see and the humid, sooty vapour penetrated his lungs. It was strange how the fog absorbed all sound !

Was there such a phenomenon as a mirage possible in the fog ? For a moment Sun Yat Sen thought to see a brown-yellow face, similar to his own. But it disappeared at once.

I know Yuan Shi Kai well, Sun Yat Sen thought ; behind his smiling obesity there is hidden the horrible cruelty of a menaced bureaucrat.

He is efficient, a good organizer, but not flexible—just like the man of Honan he is. Even our revolutionaries in that province are like him. They want small circles. they cling to doctrines. The quarrel about a petty symbol could ruin a revolution there. When will I be able to combine all these secret organizations ?

There was the brown-yellow face again. Not a mirage—it was the face of a strange Chinese. Close to Sun Yat Sen, it emerged out of the fog.

The face of a Northern Chinese, Sun Yat Sen thought ; the man must be a giant. Northern Chinese in London fog ? A henchman of Yuan Shi Kai ? I wouldn't like to have to shoot in London—why, I forgot my revolver.....

He tried to take cover in a corner and waited. The face had disappeared.

He waited for a long while. When nothing stirred, he took a step forward. A staggering blow hit his neck, sweeping his hat off his head. A second blow followed. A sand-bag or a truncheon, he thought.

Then the clearness of his brain dimmed till it became one with the fog. He still registered that he had collapsed on the ground. Then there was only rotating fog rapidly condensing to utter darkness.

When Sun Yat Sen regained consciousness, he was lying on a couch in a well-lit, big room. He was handcuffed. Round him a few Chinese were sitting, one of whom he recognized as a plaincloth man who once in Canton had shadowed him. He scanned the faces attentively: three soldier faces of Manchuria, broad, big boned and void of expression; the nervous face of the Cantonese plaincloth man; the face of the Northern Chinese he had seen in the fog—the man really was a giant; a Malay face from Tongking: and these two fat faces were snouts from Honan, henchmen of Yuan Shi Kai. All men wore European dress, sat quietly and stared at Sun Yat Sen. They will probably kill me now, he thought.

The door opened and a small man with a goatie entered quickly. Stopping in front of Sun Yat Sen, he said seriously, without a trace of mocking:

“Well, now we have you.”

This man is from Pekin, Sun Yat Sen thought; he looks like one of the *literati*. He asked:

“And where am I?”

“In the Imperial Chinese Embassy in London.”

“You know, of course, that you have grossly violated the law of Britain?”

“I abide by the laws of China. Besides, this place is extraterritorial.”

“Which by no means permits you to indulge in

kidnapping in the streets of London. I demand my immediate release."

"No." the man with the goatie said grimly.

"Who are you?"

"Oh, I am terribly sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. I am Wang Lien, special representative. My mission concerns you exclusively. You are the organizer of a rebellion in China."

"Once again, I demand my immediate release."

"No."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"We shall take you to China where you will face your trial, after having been thoroughly interrogated."

"I am convinced that my friends in England have already been informed of my disappearance."

"I doubt....."

"I am convinced of it. They will intervene immediately and the British Government will certainly not tolerate this kidnapping."

"There is no kidnapping, Dr. Sun Yat Sen. You are a Chinese and not a British subject....."

"Never mind. The laws of democratic England....."

"My dear Doctor, this has nothing to do with your case. It is the undisputable right of the relatives of a dangerous lunatic who at the moment resides in Britain but is a Chinese subject, to intern him under the supervision of an alienist in the Embassy of his country in order to take him to China for further treatment. Do you understand?"

"I.....understand....."

"At last. You better come quietly. Your duty as a subject of the Son of the Heavens is to obey his

orders. I received orders to bring you to China and I obey. For you too submission is best....."

"I refuse to obey your orders as well as the orders of this Son of the Heavens who is being systematically poisoned by the Dowager Empress....."

"I shall have to record your utterances."

"Do, by all means. I protest against the kidnapping which is typical for Manchu China. I will....."

"You won't. If you care to scream here, nobody will hear you. If you care to scream while you are being transported aboard—well, a certificated lunatic is at ease to scream as much as he likes. I have only one duty—to bring you quickly and alive to China. There you may protest—in court."

The cheap restaurant in Soho was overcrowded. A tired, flatfooted, lymphatic waiter moved like a contortionist in and out between the rickety tables. Whenever the door was opened, gusts of tamborine music and the tune of a popular song floated into the room. But the words sang to the popular tune were sickly pious—the zealous invention of General Booth who nine years ago had founded the Salvation Army. A member of the Salvation Army Band entered the restaurant to try and collect money. He was a giant negro, wedging with bent back in between chairs and tables ; while he pushed his collecting plate under the noses of the customers, he stared with wide open eyes and hanging lips at the ceiling. Coming to a group of young Chinese who whispered rapidly with each other, he pushed his plate in front of them. stared at the ceiling and waited. The Chinese scrutinized him

with suspicion and then took up their whispering again. He went to the adjoining table.

One of the Chinese was unmistakably a man from the North. The others, listening to him, registered agitation and horror.

"He can't come," the Chinese whispered in the dialect of Honan. "Since they have Sun Yat Sen, no clerk is permitted to leave the Embassy. But he found a way to get in touch with me and give me the news. After this I don't want to meet you. It is too dangerous. These people watch one another. And perhaps they have seen Hu and me together."

"You are right," a slim, extremely well dressed Chinese said in the hasty dialect of Canton. "We won't meet after this; but you should continue your contact with Hu at any price. Send your messages to this address," he wrote it on a piece of paper. "Now go."

The man from Honan left quickly. As he opened the door they heard the words of another Salvation Army Song :

"..... joy confidence sweet thrill....."

"Corybantic Christianity.....says Huxley," the well dressed Chinese murmured. "But what to do now? We have to appeal to British Government."

"We better do this through Englishmen," a quiet man said, also in the dialect of Canton.

"It will be damned difficult to make them understand that Sun Yat Sen is a political prisoner and not a lunatic. The representative of Pekin has all necessary credentials to prove that he is a relative of

Sun Yat Sen. He even has a medical certificate declaring Sun Yat Sen to be a dangerous lunatic."

"We have to stir up public opinion. A press campaign, questions in parliament—whatever we can achieve. We can't lose time. It is now three days since they hold Sun Yat Sen a prisoner. They won't wait much longer to get him out of the country."

For eight days Sun Yat Sen was in danger of being carried off to China. When the public got wind of the affair, the Chinese Embassy let it be known that he was a dangerous lunatic who best be transported back to China.

The British tread carefully in political matters. They don't like diplomatic dissensions for the sake of an alien. But justice is in their blood, and they intensely dislike people infringing their laws.

Sun's energetic English friends roused the ministries. At last they brought about that the Chinese Embassy, well aware of the flagrant breach of law that had been committed, had to free Sun Yat Sen. That happened on the very day on which Huang, the coolie, passing the German Embassy in Pekin, started to whistle joyfully.

HUANG, the coolie, was in joyful mood for his wife had born him a man-child. Therefore he whistled while dragging a heavy handcart along, just in front of the German Embassy in Pekin.

Suddenly a big fat man barred his way and shouted at him in an unintelligible language. Huang stopped, frightened. He didn't know what the man wanted. Two other massive men rushed at him and dragged him into the Embassy. The handcart from which they had torn his desperately clinging hands, remained on the road.

The German Ambassador, looking out of a window, had seen the passing coolie and heard him whistle. He was of the opinion that it was impertinent of a Chinese to dare to whistle in front of the German Embassy. He moreover thought that the coolie had whistled in a provocative manner. With German determination and efficiency he organized at once the apprehension of the whistling coolie.

They gave Huang a beating and then kicked him out of the Embassy. With aching limbs and quite bewildered he put himself again in front of his cart and dragged it along.

In the evening he told different people of his inexplicable adventure. The faces of the people grew hot with hatred of the tall fat foreigners. They advised Huang to file a complaint. Huang complained. The German Ambassador too complained. He demanded an audience to press for the trial and punishment of the coolie who had dared to whistle in front of the German Embassy. On the way to this audience the German Ambassador was shot.

Ever since he was able to think Wen Fang had hated foreigners. They never went on foot while he had to creep like a rat through the stinking refuse of the bazaar. They ate unimaginable things while he had been hungry from his first conscious day. He remembered the long, slack, shrivelling breasts of his mother which in vain she had offered to the merciless mouth of the child. He was her thirteenth child: before he was one year old, her last milk had dried up. But out of habit she offered him her useless breasts till he was three years old. She was rather stupid, her eyes frightened, her head tired, emptied and stubborn. Again and again she tried to feed the child. But the milk was dried up.

When Wen was a bit older, his father sent him out to beg. Wen was well trained; he howled, clang to the robes of the passers-by, captured his copper coins by yelling persistence. But his father at once took them away from him. His father was always unexpectedly there when Wen had been successful in his begging. Nothing could be hidden before him. And he only left Wen the putrid food rests, which Wen much more often received than money. He himself ate rice, the

greedy bloated old sot. He had thirteen children, one Wen more or less was of no consequence.

Starvation had deformed Wen's bones. distorted his face, stunted his chest. He was weak and had to take many beatings because he couldn't defend himself. Sometimes he squatted coughing in a corner and thought that in this his life he could perhaps have become a strong man if he had had food. But he hadn't had food. This was irrevocable. Whatever he now pinched and ate—he had ceased to grow. The deformity of his bones, the decay of his lungs, the feebleness of his arms were irrevocable.

He decided to become strong by magic. Chuan Seh, the seller of firework, rockets and fumigators, told him once :

"I am invulnerable. I belong to the Boxers."

That was when the skin on Wen's cheek had been ripped open by another beggar and his blood had dropped on the ground.

Wen used his powerful, hoarse, inexorable and inescapable stream of howling in which he begged, to make Chuan at last take him along to the Boxers. They didn't know any class distinction. Wen became a member. He came to know that it was right to hate the foreigners. Even the Dowager Empress hated the foreigners. She had captured the Emperor just when he wanted to betray China to the foreign devils and she kept him a prisoner in a glass tower.

He also came to know that the mysterious ceremonies of his initiation had made him invulnerable. No bullet could hit him and no knife could rip his cheek open again.

"Would you like to hear this poem, mummy? It's wonderful—by Li-Tai-Pe."

"I think I heard of this man. If I am not mistaken he died, falling into the water in a state of intoxication. I don't know whether you should read books written by such an individual, Amy."

Amy Mitchell put her book aside, pouting. Mrs. Mitchell looked extremely worried.

"I would like to know why your father insisted on inviting Mr. Miller. Nobody up to now invited Mr. Miller. There is nothing tangible.....he seems to be quite decent but somebody said he has been in a Chinese prison....."

"How interesting! Do you think he knows Chinese?"

"Nothing would surprise me with this man. I told you nobody invites him. But your father has suddenly business reasons. That the Websters perhaps won't mix with me any more after this, is of no interest to him....."

"Mummy, I would like to learn Chinese."

"What?" Mrs. Mitchell had her "twitch." It went from her left eye over the entire left part of her face and appeared only at unexpected painful disturbances. Amy Mitchell was full of remorse.

"Please, mummy, I only thought....Li-Tai-Pe verses are really so beautiful in English translation, I wondered how they were in the original....."

"I wish you would take less after your father," Mrs. Mitchell said. The twitching of her cheek gained in accusing intensity. "Your desire is just on the same level as his demand to invite Mr. Miller."

She got up and went out of the room. Amy Mitchell took her book and began to read aloud:

“Moonlight clings to the tiniest blossoms.....”

“Moonlight clings to the tiniest blossoms..... How do you like this verse, Mr. Miller?” Amy Mitchell asked.

Moonlight flooded the garden of the Mitchell's bungalow. They had dined and had now coffee on the verandah. Mr. Mitchell and Herr Horn talked business. Mr. Miller pricked up his ears. The poetical prattle of the Mitchell girl drowned here and there one of the figures Herr Horn recited in his guttural accent, and this irritated Mr. Miller unbearably.

“Wonderful,” he said mechanically from time to time.

“I love China. I wish I could know the country as well as you do. The pretty pagodas, the good-natured, pigtailed people, the cherry blossoms.....”

“Wonderful,” Mr. Miller said. The back of his head ached with the strain to concentrate on the details of Mr. Mitchell's and Herr Horn's conversation under the gush of this confounded maiden.

“We'll need a concession for that,” Mr. Mitchell said. “The Chinese won't be willing to give that.”

“Willing or not,” Herr Horn said smartly, “we'll call them to order. By God's grace we have our Kaiser, he'll show them.....”

“Nevertheless, we should have a pretext.... something to complain....it couldn't be so difficult... the atmosphere is really rather charged with restlessness....especially today I had the feeling something

is going to happen.....if there were a clever partner who would be attacked by the Chinese....."

"There we are." Mr. Miller thought. "I'm to be the clever partner. Therefore the invitation to dinner. I'll have to take the chestnuts out of the fire for them, they'll pocket the profits. They know I've been in a Chinese jail already."

"Moonlight clings to the tiniest blossoms....Do you perhaps know this verse in Chinese, Mr. Miller ?" Amy Mitchell said. "Papa says you know the Interior well. I envy you. I think the Chinese have a very ancient civilization....."

"Oh, shut up." Miller thought. "now they will start to come to terms with me. Not a dollar less than twenty thousand....."

Aloud he said :

"Wonderful. Unfortunately I have forgotten this verse."

Mrs. Mitchell startled and almost got her "twitch " again. It was unbelievable the way the Boy Li came rushing on the verandah. He definitely screamed :

"Mastel Mitchel." Then there came a flood of Chinese words. Miller jumped up, he was the only one who understood. Herr Horn, Mr. Mitchell and the two ladies looked at him, suddenly in panic. Then the chirping, rustling, moonlit silence that had surrounded the house was shattered by yelling, howling, demoniac, shrill, agonizing noises. In a second the mob came washing in like tide out of time, unexpected, inexplicable, beyond rule and reason.

Mr. Miller, the only one who carried a pistol, shot —to no purpose. The fire was returned, the moonlight, clinging to the tiniest blossoms in truth, clang equally

to the howling lips, the jabbering, spitting teeth in brown-yellow faces. Amy felt as if swimming in an unclean sea, thrown to the sharks. Mrs. Mitchell forgot herself and screamed. Herr Horn, small, with a pot-belly, rolled his eyes above the bristling ends of his handlebar moustache. Mr. Mitchell was the first to be killed—a short iron bar smashed his skull. Mr. Miller tried to defend the women but as no bullet was left in his pistol, he was brought to fall and kicked to death. Then they killed the Boy Li. Herr Horn tried to escape over a wall, but many yellow hands clawed at him and dragged him down. He lived for another two days, lying in the garden with a slashed pot-belly and protruding intestines. He had to see the Chinese queue up to defile the corpses of the two women, in the moonlight which, utterly undisturbed, clang to the tiniest blossoms.

The international expeditionary force commanded by the German Count Waldersee took Pekin. Gunboats destroyed the Summer Residence.

Li Hung Chang came hastily from Canton. The old man ground his teeth. On the eve of death which he felt near, he wanted to save China once again.

Seventy-eight years ago Li Hung Chang had been born in Hofei in Nganhui. When he was thirty-six years old, he had, together with the ten years younger Charles George Gordon, Captain in the British Army, set out to crush the Taiping rebellion. When he was forty-one he had just about finished this work, subdued Nanking and Soochow, thanks to Tseng Kuo Fan's Yangs-tse-kiang junks. He became Governor of Kiang-su, then Viceroy of Hu-Kwang. After the death

of the Emperor Tung-chi he had hastened to enthrone the boy Kwang-Su. In 1884 he had learnt that the Mahdi had planted the head of General Charles George Gordon on the walls of Khartoum.

Ten years later the Chinese-Japanese war revealed that Li Hung Chang had failed to create a useful army. He left the country and toured Europe and the United States. In 1900 he became Viceroy of Canton. What had happened between the Dowager Empress, Kwang-Sun, his erstwhile puppet, and Yuan Shi Kai the hated, he had not been able to prevent. His influence had vanished. But now when the Dowager-Empress saw that the "Boxer" rebellion which she had favoured so graciously, endangered her rule, she remembered the man who had crushed the Taiping revolt.

Li Hung Chang was very old and very tired. But he hadn't forgotten the ways of Captain Gordon, Tseng Kue Fan and his other teachers. Under his hand, not afraid of blood, the ill-organized, anarchistic "Boxer" rebellion crumpled.

The hardest days of his life began, the negotiations with the arrogant Western barbarians, who were commanded by a man whose Kaiser had screamed :

"They will tremble before us as people once trembled before the Huns. 'Prisoners will not be taken. No quarter will be given.'

They had the guns. Cursing the shortsightedness of the Dowager Empress and Yuan Shi Kai who had thought the "Boxer" propaganda a good safety valve for the discontent of the people, he had to agree to sign and seal a most humiliating peace treaty. In the same year, on the 7th November, Li Hung Chang died.

VASSILIJ Ivanovich Kolkov guffawed when he heard the news. In his life he had only seen two Japanese, both yellow, pitifully small and pitifully thin. They had almost no noses. Vassilij's brother Nikolaj had once, on account of a lost bet—whether the horse had spavin or was limping out of sheer malevolence—eaten his left boot, cut, minced, with butter, little cucumbers and onions. Vassilij was convinced his brother Nikolaj could easily eat both Japanese in one sitting, and now such stunted little men as the Japanese were, had declared war on the Holy Tzar.

Vassilij Ivanovitch Kolkov was a horseman from Irkutsk. His forefathers, kossacks, had conquered the vast country through which, by God's and the Tzar's will, a few weeks ago he had been sent to Port Arthur.

Vassilij was a faithful servant of the Holy Tzar. Two days ago he had denounced his pal Pavel Dimitrijevich, called "Little Giant," to the officer because Pavel Dimitrijevich who knew to read, had read to the other soldiers from little papers covered with dense, small print which a certain Lenin had drawn up. The officer had praised Vassilij and told Lenin had been hunted out of the country because

he was worshipping the Devil. He also had had a brother who tried to kill his Majesty, the Tzar. Then the officer, frowning, delved into the closely printed matter. Pavel Dimitrijevich was taken to the guardroom, and they said he would have to face a court martial and dig his grave in no time. Vassilij Ivanovitch felt sorry for him although, of course, everybody had to die once. But he had acted correctly to save the Tzar from the blackhearted little papers of the Devil worshipper. He was also ready to save the Tzar and Holy Russia from the Japanese.

"To save".....that, of course, made him guffaw. These little Japs who didn't even reach up to the third button of his uniform, wanted to have a shindy with the Russians? He wondered whether their horses were that small too.

Vassilij laughed and whistled into the lively ears of his horse. The name of the horse was Matvej, and he had his faults. He liked to buck and he ate too much.

They said the Japanese would besiege the fortress. They had without shame attacked Russian ships and shot at them with torpedoes. Vassilij would give them —torpedoes, indeed! Such little punks and shoot with torpedoes! To catch them in his bare hands and mince them like Nikolaj's boot, that was the right treatment for such bugs.

A bugle signal sounded. Fall in! Vassilij hastily swept a bit of rotting straw from under the hoofs of Matvej. The other soldiers came already running to the stable. The saddles flew smack on the backs of the horses which took their heads back and squinted at the men near their cheeks. Vassilij was the first to

pull his horse out of the stable. He mounted and cantered to the parade ground. The others galloped after him.

The officers came and took the parade. Then they commanded the men to follow and trotted off.

"Where to?" Sergej Petrovich, riding at Vassilij's side, whispered. Vassilij shrugged his shoulders. The officers were leading them, they would know where to. They trotted out of the town. Eh, Vassilij thought, now we are going to take Japan. Matvej stumbled over a big stone. Vassilij pulled the reins short to prevent the stumble becoming a fall. In front of them there stretched yellow, loamy plains. Behind them grey dust floated in their wake. The sky too was grey. It will rain soon, Vassilij thought. He was full of expectant thrill. Soon there will be the command: attack. Then we gallop, urra. somewhere are the Japanese, we are over them.....Sabre-cuts right and left.....no quarter given.....we'll have to sabre low enough at these tiny manikins. their horses are perhaps still smaller.....the hoofs of our horses will smash their yellow snouts.....I'm sure they will whine for mercy.....but we'll give them—to shoot with torpedoes at our ships.....ah, here we are !

The bugle sounded. The squadrons started to gallop. Far away they saw cavalry—Japanese, which at once turned to flee.

"Urра," Vassilij shouted. The others took it up : "Urра....."

"How the Japanese cantered away. Their horses weren't so small, after all. But a horse like Matvej would overtake them....."

The officer in front of Vassilij's squadron flung his arms up. The reins fell from his hands, he rolled off the saddle. His horse, taking fright, turned, squeezed between the other horses, turned again and galloped, riderless, as they galloped. Nobody had heard a shot. Nobody saw the enemy. But now shooting started. The bullets smashed into the dense masses of the Russian cavalry. Horses pranced, troopers tumbled from their saddles, Sergej Petrovich got it in the throat. He fell back and his blood squirted high like a fountain. Matvej neighed, dancing panicky on his hunches. Vassilij couldn't see anything. There was no Japanese near them. Yet they shot. The troopers fell by the dozens. The officers, the ranks immediately behind them turned to flee. That enabled Vassilij to get a glimpse of what was going on in front of them.

He was terrified at what he saw. Somebody was shooting—out of the bowels of the earth. Many shot out of the very ground. One couldn't see them. couldn't hit them, couldn't ride them down. This was black magic. The troopers cursed and shouted, the horses neighed. Their withdrawal became a rout. The Japanese proceeded to shoot out of the ground. The Russians shot back and couldn't hit them. The Japanese bullets, however, hit the routed troopers in their backs. Left and right of the sweating, madly galloping Matvej, the sons of Russia rolled off their horses. Suddenly Vassilij felt a blow between his ribs. He gasped for breath, lost hold of Matvej's reins, and slid off the saddle. Matvej dragged him along a bit, his head hitting the little stones on the ground, then his foot that had been caught in the stirrup slipped out of it, he rolled back and was left lying on

the ground, horses sweeping left and right and over him.

He woke up when rain obliquely flogged his face. His spine was full of pain. He coughed. He tried to sit up and stared around. Over the corpses of the Russian troopers, thousands of small yellow men were marching, with dark field service caps on their yellow expressionless heads and bright gaiters on their calves. When they saw Vassilij sit up, a few came up to him and took him prisoner. They handed him over to others, who stared in his face, showing their teeth in a grimace of hatred, gripped him, shook him and marched him back, through the flood of the torrent beating down, and the flood of marching tiny men. Vassilij, limping painfully, came to the place where the Russian cavalry had been attacked by invisible enemies. He saw that the ground had been turned upside down. As far as his dimming eyes could see through the grey walls of rain, a large winding trench had been digged, in which small yellow men were squatting behind their rifles. Their faces, their caps and gaiters were full of earth and mire. They squatted there as if it were the decent thing to squat in a wet trench.

Vassilij staggered along under the fists of the dwarfs. In his feverish dimming eyes there was dumb bewilderment.

These people, he thought, hardly able to grasp the fact, these people—digging themselves into the ground. We want to fight an honest to God war with them, but they dig themselves into the ground.....

"The trenches brought us victory," Lieutenant Kamato said, "New tactics, puzzling the Russians...."

"No," Yoshi, the student said excited. "Not the tactics of the trenches. The National impulse. The waking up of our nation combined with the heroic samurai tradition. What is your opinion, Doctor?"

Sun Yat Sen rose and went over to the window. Outside there was Tokyo, in the slight mist of the evening.

"Both," he said. "Samurai tradition and trenches. But above all, efficient organization. I would China were as advanced as that."

"That will happen," Yoshi said. "We shall help. We too had first to be humiliated to rise. Many curse the American Perry. I would like to raise a memorial for him. The gunfire of his ships, forcing their entrance into the prohibited harbour, humiliated us; and our desire to make it impossible for anybody to humiliate us again, made us advance to a point where we humiliate others with our gunfire. Great and powerful Russia—we defeated her."

"I have been thinking about Russia in these last weeks," Sun Yat Sen said frowning. "Why did their revolution collapse? The Government of the Tzar, discredited on account of the pitiable way they prosecuted the war, is tremendously weakened. All conditions for a revolution were there: the people ready, the machinery of oppression disintegrating—why, in Petersburg a Socialist newspaper was published openly—and yet the Revolution has been squashed."

"It wasn't national," Yoshi said bombastically.

He was a small man, wearing thick glasses. His broad shoulders, his supple arms and legs betrayed the jiu-jitsu training which saw him every evening in the gymnasium. Yet he had a weak heart and would probably die if he proceeded with his exhausting training ; for this reason he hadn't been conscripted in the war against Russia. Lieutenant Kamato had been in action and had been wounded twice.

"True," Sun Yat Sen said. "the Russian revolution was, of course, not nationalist. But the structure of Russia is different from China. We are only able to work for a national revolution. Russia with her thoroughly organized and on internationalist lines thinking working class, the leaders of which are fanatic Marxists....."

"Only the national idea can be successful," Yoshi said excited. "Socialism is the dream of feeble children. We Japanese know this, we won't need revolutions. Our national idea will bring us fame, power and wealth. We shall defeat the Western powers, we shall bring America to her knees. Studying all their technical and scientific inventions, we shall turn them against their inventors. We shall also make China free and happy. You know how well your ideas are received in Japan. You will establish a national China, and national Japan together with national China will be invincible. We shall trample down the Western barbarians, we shall surprise them as we surprised Russia, we shall taste victory as never before....."

"At the moment the Western powers and America have cheated us out of the fruits of the present victory," Kamato said bitterly. "I think you are rather

walking in the clouds, Yoshi. These powers gave us only a hint of a threat and we had to give up almost everything we had conquered."

"We shall declare war on America and Britain," Yoshi shouted.

Kamato smiled.

"Don't laugh," Yoshi said furiously. "You will see, one day we shall attack them.....perhaps without declaring war on them....."

"When I was in Europe," Sun Yat Sen said thoughtfully, "I met the son-in-law of Karl Marx. He told me Karl Marx often said the so-called rules of war are only a sentimental relic of chivalry. Soon the piratical excursions—which wars really are—would be denuded of their sentimental ideology, and one country would attack the other as a robber attacks his victim—without warning....."

"This utterance alone shows the infamy of this man. I have heard of Karl Marx—a Socialist, a damnable weaver of theories. For us Japanese war will always be a holy crusade for the honour of our nation even if we attack without declaration of war. Do you believe in this Karl Marx ?"

"I refute his theories to a great extent," Sun Yat Sen said. "There mustn't be war within a nation. I don't believe in his theory of the classes. Yet it is necessary to fulfil certain Socialist demands—just to avoid trouble. I am now expecting a guest, a Russian Socialist who fought during their abortive revolution, was apprehended, condemned to death but then sent to Siberia from where he managed to escape to Japan. I met him and asked him to come and see me today. It is necessary to learn from all revolutions."

"At any rate interesting," Yoshi said. "But I would like to teach this man nationalism."

"Perhaps you will," Sun Yat Sen said smiling. "Although he doesn't give the impression of being easily converted. Let's wait and see."

They waited. Lieutenant Kamato took a French novel and read. Yoshi looked out of the window drumming at the pane. Sun Yat Sen, his lips pressed together, worked on a cipher system he was drawing up.

After half an hour his guest came, a very tall, vigorous man whose full white face was overgrown with an enormous rather dirty looking black beard and unsymmetrically distributed hair on the saddle of his nose, in his nostrils and ears. His dark eyes were slanting but their outer corners were lower than their inner ones which gave him a melancholic, depressed expression. His skull was large, bald and very pale. He bowed his head, clicked his heels in rather German fashion, and entered the room with mincing steps. Sun Yat Sen shook him by the hand and introduced Kamato and Yoshi. The Russian's name was Turichevsky. Sitting down, he began to lecture almost immediately and as a matter of course. He talked French, with a hard accent, but fluently and correctly.

"You are interested in the history of our last revolution, Doctor?" he said. "I know your position, you are an exile like me. I am ready to inform you but you will understand that I cannot give names of people who still are in Russia. I also can only talk of my personal experiences."

"Please, do," Sun Yat Sen said.

" My name is Alexej Galaktionovich Turitchevsky. I was an engineer in Saratov. At first follower of Michail Alexandrovich Bakunin, I later became a Social-Democrat. When at the London conference of the Russian Social Democrat Party the Bolsheviki separated from the Mensheviki I declared in favour of the Bolsheviki.

" In our town the Mensheviki were the majority. We had many disputes and quarrels. I assume that one of the Mensheviki wrote an anonymous denunciation to the police on account of which my house was searched. But I had always been cautious, and was considered a rather loyal citizen. Nothing happened to me.

" As you see, I am quite old. I wasn't conscripted for the war with Japan. To be honest, I ought to confess that when this war started I was gripped by a fit of national lunacy. In our underground meetings I propagated the opinion that one had to do one's duty as a soldier if called up. Many comrades opposed me sharply, very soon Lenin's instructions on what to do arrived, and we saw that we had to do everything to make Russia lose the war. Now, I don't think our propaganda and sabotage was really necessary. Our Generals with Kuropatkin on top, saw to it that we lost the war. We jubilated, the time for revolution was here. When we heard of the revolt in Petersburg, we acted at once. Our factory workers at once downed tools....."

" A strike should be punishable by death," Yoshi said.

Turitchevsky looked at him, astonished. " Strike is our best weapon," he said. " No revolution should

ever start without preliminary or simultaneous general strike."

"But we don't want revolution in Japan," Yoshi said sharply. "We are national, we worship our dynasty. If you are here to stir up revolutionary sentiments in Japan....."

"Not at all," Turitchevsky said smiling. "I am not here for that, as little as Dr. Sun Yat Sen is here to make revolution in Japan. I want to help to prepare a new revolution in my home country. In this respect I am certainly nationalist minded."

"What?" Kamato asked. "Just now your revolution has been squashed in blood, and you already think of the next one?"

"I know that many of us have withdrawn," Turitchevsky explained. "Some said the failure of this revolution showed that revolution at all was impossible. The best thing was to moderate demands and try for reforms. Others, disappointed, made about turn and became reactionaries. Some withdrew from any organizational work and became *literati*. Some even became mystics. But they are the *intelligenzia*. The masses, the workers, those who count have already closed their ranks again. Cruel persecution itself begets renewed resistance. I don't know how it is in other provinces, but according to my impression, the workers lost their dejection very soon. First they wouldn't believe the revolution had miscarried. Then they realized it and were in agony. But those who had not been killed or arrested, started at once to build up the organization again and this is the

encouraging root of the next revolution. On account of this immediate process of regeneration I believe in the next revolution."

"I am very interested in this," Sun Yat Sen said, "the rallying of the defeated forces of the revolution. I read your theoreticians on this question and I admire them. They say frankly: we lost the battle. Let's analyze why. Let us learn from our mistakes and prepare for the next battle. Now, another question, Monsieur Turitchevsky. How was the balance of military strength, at the strategic moment in the revolution?"

"I know very little about that. Saratov is not a very important place and we were only busy with our own affairs. I think we had infiltrated far too little into police and military. The masses were not trained enough for street fighting. In Saratov we definitely lost because we didn't go on the streets in an all out offensive. We should also have carried on the strike longer. But without discussing these questions with my comrades first, I can't give you precise explanations."

"I can give them," Yoshi said. "Your revolution was not national. A Socialist revolt can never win. Surely every man feels deep down in his heart that Socialism is pernicious. How can one fight with this feeling in one's subconscious?"

"Without doubt you have studied Socialism thoroughly," Turitchevsky asked seriously.

"I don't waste my time on that," Yoshi said. "I look with reverence up to our heroes and stalwarts like Marquess Nogi or Marquess Oku. I applaud if Russia is undermined by people like you, for Russia is our

enemy. Yet—how strong could a national Russia be without you."

Turitchevsky smiled most mirthfully.

"My dear young man," he said. "Contemporary Russia is decidedly anti-national. Not international, but anti-national for she is imperialist. The Russian language, the Orthodox Church, the Russian knout are forced upon subjugated peoples—South of Rostov and East of Ufa. The Russia of the future, of which I dream, will be Socialist but much more and in a sense unimaginable to you, national. And once Japan too goes socialist....."

"Never!" Yoshi shouted, even Lieutenant Kamato looked frightened.

"Permit me to interrupt," Sun Yat Sen said. "I happen not to believe in Socialism—to my mind a democratic constitution is needed in China, an assembly of all orders and classes—there can be no question of Socialism."

YUAN SHI KAI paced restlessly up and down in his office. The Dowager Empress was about to die.

Yuan Shi Kai had still grown fatter. His cheeks were sagging, he panted at the slightest exertion. From time to time he turned his head anxiously to the curtain of the entrance. His finely chiselled ears listened intently.

In the palace, the eunuchs walked noiselessly round and whispered messages to each other, tiny details which seemed to them pregnant with overpowering importance: The Dowager Empress had suddenly sat up and looked round. Perhaps, perhaps she was going to live!

The wrinkled spongy faces of the eunuchs grimaced joyfully and panicky.

The face of the Dowager Empress Tse Hsi was sunken and didn't move any more. Her Mongolian yet aquiline nose the nostrils of which had ceased to breathe stood out over her open dry lips. The small withered hands were hanging down, left and right from her couch.

A child, the not yet two years old, Hsuan Tung, was carried in. They made him, holding him gently,

stand near the corpse. He looked at it with his big eyes. Then he touched it playfully with one finger. But feeling death on his finger tip, he took fright and began to screech. They hastily carried the new Son of the Heavens out of the room.

The curtain of Yuan Shi Kai's office was flung back. A tall Chinese with a withered, all too pale face, entered. Yuan Shi Kai bowed deeply.

"My Prince," he said.

The man stood for a short time silent. His face expressed sincere grief, in spite of his effort to control his features and keep them calm.

"The Dowager Empress is dead," he said directly and clearly. Yuan Shi Kai pretended to be shocked and in anguish. He laid his hand over his heart, and the fat layer under the skin of his face began to tremble. Then he pretended to control himself again. He murmured:

"Most terrible, most grievous. An irreparable loss for mourning China."

"Yes," the Prince said. He kept silent for a while. Yuan Shi Kai's eyes were on his lips. The Prince turned to go. In front of the curtain he looked back, over his shoulder.

"By the way," he said. "Your Excellency will be relieved of the difficult and tiresome office of "Guardian of the Heir." I hope Your Excellency will welcome this relief."

Yuan Shi Kai, once again, laid his hand over his heart and bowed. This time the fat layer under his skin remained as it had been, run to a smile.

"Most welcome, my Prince," he whispered. The

KWANTUNG MESSAGE

Prince went out of the room. Yuan Shi Kai looked after him, hatred in his eyes. His legs trembled. Then the fat of his body and the fat of his face regained their accustomed calm.

Cheng Lun was a shrivelled old man, a merchant in Canton, most loyal to the Manchu. Still, he longed for a tiny bit more freedom. He had admired Yuan Shi Kai, the strong man who was prominent after Li Hung Chang's death. With excitement and joy he had watched how circumspect Yuan Shi Kai as Viceroy of Chili had reorganized the Army. When after the death of the Dowager Empress, Yuan Shi Kai disappeared, Cheng Lun sighed.

"Really, China goes to the dogs," he said. "Now they have chucked out the only capable man."

One day, in 1910, the news spread through China that the Regency were about to permit Provincial Assemblies. Cheng Lun was very pleased. This will be a blessing for the existing order, he thought. People will see that the Regency are willing to help them, and will calm down. Canton was always a bad place. If another rebellion starts, it is sure to start here. Then I'll have to close my shop again God knows how long. These Provincial Assemblies are excellent. When the news was officially confirmed and the Provincial Assemblies were constituted, Cheng Lun, as many other merchants, bought crackers and other firework and with their help displayed his joy noisily on the roof of his house.

The last piece of paper, still crackling a bit, fell to ashes.

"Finished," Sun Yat Sen said.

He and his assistants prepared everything for his departure from Tokyo to Europe and America. Sun Yat Sen was about to tour again, to deliver lectures on China and discuss current affairs with the organizations of the Chinese abroad. He had hesitated to embark on this just now. The situation in China was acute. The cliques represented in the Regency, the quarrels of the cowardly ministers dissenting among themselves, did everything to undermine the position of the child on the throne. But at the moment there was still no chance of revolution. Sun Yat Sen would have to go to Europe.

"Where are the cipher keys?" he asked.

"Dispatched in advance," a young Chinese said, carefully setting fire to the rest of an only partially burnt piece of paper and stirring the ashes.

"No copy has been forgotten here?"

"None. I am just destroying the last one."

"We have to be careful," Sun Yat Sen said. "The spies of the Manchu will turn this room upside down after we have left. They won't mind burglary. The Japanese too will sniff about here. Burn everything thoroughly."

Somebody knocked at the door. Another young Chinese went and peeped through a spyhole.

"A telegraph messenger," he said.

He opened the door a bit and took the telegram. It was addressed to the young Chinese who was busy burning papers but they knew it was for Sun Yat Sen. While the young Chinese signed and gave the receipt to the messenger, Sun Yat Sen opened the cover hastily.

As he had guessed it was a telegram the contents of which appeared harmless but hid a cipher. It had been wired from Shanghai and a certain word at the beginning showed that it was most important and urgent.

But Sun Yat Sen wasn't able to decode it. They had already despatched the cipher keys. Staring at the telegram, he tried to reconstruct the cipher by heart. But it was too elaborate. He sat down and started to calculate.

"We postpone our departure," he said. "Have the luggage and cipher keys returned at once."

"You want to postpone the tour to Europe?" the young Chinese protested. "Now we have arranged every detail of....."

Sun Yat Sen's impatient gesture silenced him. His brows drawn together, his lips pressed against his teeth, Sun Yat Sen calculated. But for the time being he was not able to figure the cipher out and decode the telegram.

Yang the soldier was tall and heavyboned. His parents had been farmers near Han-kow, and Yang had suckled in hatred of the rich landlords with the milk from his mother's nipples.

His father and brothers toiled on the fields from morning till night. His mother, helplessly fluttering from one to the other, tried to cope with her work on the fields, with the cattle, on the stove. Yang remembered how she once collapsed on a field and he, who had been riding on her hip, crashed, his head first, on stones and weeds.

His father had a high, soundless voice and coughed

a lot. When Yang's mother collapsed, his father and his grown-up brothers came running and carried her and Yang back to their hut. Then they ran on to the fields again for the day's work had to be finished.

The mother, in the darkness of the hut, rolled from one side to the other, groaning and sometimes muttering to herself. There was no fire in the stove. Yang squatted in the dust of a corner and was afraid.

Late in the evening his father and his grown-up brothers returned from the fields. His father knelt down near the mother and felt her head and her hands. Then he squatted outside the hut, staring into space. Yang's brothers laid down and slept.

Later Yang's father came and ate some rice. He felt again the head of the mother, then he went to sleep.

On the next day Yang's mother still pitched from one side to the other and groaned. Yang's father looked at her, grieved, then he went with his sons to the fields. When he came home in the evening, Yang was quietly crying in his corner. He had crept through the whole hut but nobody had given him to eat. The mother was lying unconscious on the floor.

Yang's father gave a sigh and dug some money out of its hiding place near the stove. He went out and came back with the village priest, a lean toothless man with hollow cheeks. He looked at Yang's mother, then he ordered Yang's father to burn incense in order to drive the illness out. Yang's father waited till he had gone, then he gave another sigh and dug some more money out of the hiding place. He went out, came back with incense and burnt it which was very interesting for Yang.

This night Yang who had slept deeply, smothered by hunger and tiredness, woke up. Everything was dark. He heard his mother give one single tormented cry which ended in a rattle. He began to cry. Then he heard his father get up and light a woodsplinter. He saw his mother lying motionless, strangely bent. Long shadows went out from her and flickered, short or longer as the light of the splinter rolled on. His father stared at her till the light of the splinter went out. Then Yang heard him squat down at his mother's side and sigh.

The funeral of his mother was in Yang's eyes indeed a merry occasion. Arms carried him, there was music ; two old men, lame and almost blind, with a strained, concentrated expression on their faces, stumbled along in front of the procession, the one playing on a one-stringed fiddle, the other beating a little drum.

The farmers followed in white mourning clothes. That was all Yang could remember because the old woman who carried him, got tired and turned back with him. It was a deep disappointment for Yang not to be carried further behind the two lame old men who made so much agreeable noise.

Eight days after his mother's death, Yang saw the landlord for the first time ; a tall fat man in a fur cloak who even wore shoes, a thing Yang had never seen before. Yang was then sitting near a bush on the fields. His father bowed in front of the tall man with the fur cloak. The sun was hot and beads of perspiration stood on his yellow forehead ; a small goatie bristled from his fat chin. Yang's father rose after his

bow as if ready to flee. Yang's brothers too had bowed but not so deeply. Now they stared at the landlord. Yang didn't understand why the landlord shouted at his father and bent the back of his left hand into the palm of his right. But he was afraid. His father, with a tired and horrified expression, made feeble movements with his hands and stammered. His brothers stood like a pack of angry yet terrified dogs. The landlord raised his fat leg and kicked his father who fell into the furrows of the field.

The next image Yang's memory exorcised was his father squatting near the hiding place of his money, holding a flickering splinter and staring into the dug-out hole till the light went out. Then Yang heard him sigh just as he had sighed while bending over the dead woman.

At that time Yang was not able to understand the connection that existed between his mother's funeral, the empty hiding place and the wrath of the landlord demanding his rent. But all his life he remembered his father squatting with starry eyes over the hiding place, the last flicker of the fire and his father's sigh in the darkness.

Yang's father sighed more and more. Very often, broadhipped old Wu-San who had lent him rice and money, came to take something, a harrow or a spade. This and father's sigh didn't disturb Yang's childhood so much as the hunger he often suffered. Day by day they toiled to produce food, but they had little food for themselves.

When Yang was eight years old, the farmers and among them Yang's father and his brothers, suddenly

trooped up, killed broadhipped old Wu-San the moneylender and set out to get hold of their landlord. Yang and other boys of the village ran along. But before they reached the landlord who was living in a castle near Hankow, soldiers appeared and shot at them. Yang's father and brother and many other farmers were killed.

Terrified, Yang hid behind a bush; he saw the soldiers surround the others, chain them together and drag them towards the town. Yang didn't dare to return to the village but followed the prisoners at a distance. When they arrived in the city, they disappeared in a dilapidated, stinking building. Yang squatted down and waited for them. But they never came out. He wandered back to the village and saw that the soldiers had already been here. They had burned the huts down, killed a few and used many women. The old women and the wenches were sitting on the black ashes of their homes wailing shrilly and waiting for their menfolk. When Yang told them what had happened, they cursed him and his brothers who as they said had started the revolt that had brought them only grief. Yang had to flee before their nails, their wailing and howling, their furious, tormented, horrified eyes.

Yang didn't dare to go to Hankow but somehow drifted to Wuchang. He earned his bread, doing coolie work and had more to eat than where he had helped to grow food. He grew up to a tall, strong lad. Sometimes he dreamt of the rifles of the soldier who had killed his father and brothers. He feared and admired soldiers. When he was sixteen, he enlisted.

He received a rifle and was drilled. He was strong and willing, he became a good soldier. He had always thought that soldiers existed to kill peasants; and, being a soldier now, he was willing to do so. But then—in an address delivered by Li Yuan-Hung, the Commandant, he heard that soldiers existed to defend their country against the enemy—any enemy.

Li Yuan-Hung stressed the words "Any enemy." Other soldiers whispered with Yang. Almost all of them had been farmers or came from the fields. They whispered that they hated the landlords and would rather shoot them than peasants. Yang hated landlords too, but to his understanding soldiers were definitely here to shoot peasants. He had seen it with his own eyes.

Some soldiers whispered tales about the Manchu. They murmured that the former Emperor had been poisoned, that the Dowager Empress had been nothing but an evil ghost vixen who had clothed herself in a human body, that the Emperor Hsuan Tung was not yet able to talk although he was five years old. They said they hated the Manchu who were foreigners from the North and for whose sake they had to wear pig-tails.

Yang admired Li Yuan-Hung, the Commandant, greatly. Li Yuan-Hung was a large-faced, good-humoured man with smiling eyes and a fearful moustache. He rarely shouted at the soldiers and they liked him.

One day there was great agitation. Telegrams and messages of all sorts poured into the Commandant's office; he called his officers together and they had a long and secret discussion, after which Li Yuan-Hung

gave order to parade all soldiers in front of his office.

Yang was standing with the others to attention and looked attentively at the Commandant. Li Yuan-Hung seemed very calm but he was pale under his brown-yellow skin. His fingers twisted the turned down ends of his moustache. He stared round, almost into the face of each and every soldier. His officers stood rigidly behind him, one or the other trembled slightly.

"Soldiers," Li Yuan-Hung said; he didn't shout, he spoke slowly and distinctly. "Chinese soldiers, revolts have broken out in the South. The farmers are rising. There is unrest in the cities. I received orders to march against the farmers and suppress their revolt."

He paused. Now I'll go and shoot at the farmers myself, Yang thought. Now I'm going to be as mighty as the soldiers who killed my father and my brothers. He looked furtively round. Some of the soldiers looked darkly and rebellious.

"We are not going to shoot at farmers," Li Yuan-Hung said, still slowly. Then he began suddenly to shout: "We are going to march against the Manchu, this robbing, blood-sucking gang which forces the peasants to revolt of hunger. This is mutiny? May be. It is revolution. Down with the Manchu. Long live the new democratic China. Long live the National Party. Long live our leader and organizer, Sun Yat Sen."

The officers presented swords and saluted. The soldiers stared at them. Yang had never heard of a thing called National Party or a man called Sun Yat Sen. But Li Yuan-Hung was Commandant, he would know. What were they going to do now?

In this moment the jubilating, strong, high voice of a soldier, a peasant's son from the Yangtsekiang, shouted :

“ We are going against the landlords.”

The soldiers grew restless, others shouted.

“ We are going against the landlords.”

Yang in a strange fever he could not account for, shouted :

“ We are going against the landlords.” A few soldiers flung their rifles into the air, others started to fire at the sky.

Li Yuan-Hung made a furious gesture.

“ Soldiers,” he shouted, “ Revolution doesn't mean breakdown of discipline. You are soldiers of the revolution, save your rounds, you'll soon have to fire at the mercenaries of the Manchu.”

But the soldiers shot wildly and shouted :

“ We are going to kill the landlords.”

Li Yuan-Hung commanded an officer to restore discipline and have the troops marched back. “ We others,” he said excitedly, “ should immediately draw up a telegram to Doctor Sun Yat Sen.”

He turned and ran back to his office. When his officers caught up with him, they found him already scribbling away on a piece of paper.

Sun Yat Sen's lids refused to keep open any longer. He almost dropped from his chair. His face had become lean and pale in these forty-eight hours, in which he had strained his memory and power of combination. He wasn't able to remember the cipher —one of the hundred ciphers agreed upon with his men in China—or to figure it out anew. The back of his

head was aching, the uncertainty tortured him, he starkly felt that further delay in decoding the message was spelling disaster for China and himself.

He washed his face and eyes and returned to the telegram.

"That could it be," he murmured. "This is perhaps i, this o.....no, it doesn't make sense. I got to try once more the substitution key....."

A young Chinese came running into the room.

"Doctor," he panted. "There are rumours that a revolt has broken out at Wuchang."

"Wuchang ?" Sun Yat Sen whispered. "Wuchang? Let me try."

He tried to substitute Wuchang for different words in the telegram which had the same number of letters. But at that moment another young man came in announcing :

"Doctor, the cipher keys have arrived just now."

Two men carried a suitcase in. Sun Yat Sen opened it feverishly and took a few thin paper rolls out which he needed. Returning to the telegram, he worked silently, flinging the paper rolls which proved useless with an impatient gesture on the ground. After half an hour he rose. Facing his assistants, he read the decoded telegram :

**WE THE GARRISON OF WUCHANG DECLARE
THE MANCHU DYNASTY AND THE PRESENT
GOVERNMENT TO BE ENEMIES OF THE
PEOPLE AAA WE RISE TO FIGHT THEM AAA
LONG LIVE THE NEW CHINA AAA LONG LIVE
OUR LEADER SUN YAT SEN AAA LI YANG-
HUNG COMMANDANT WUCHANG GARRISON.**

"They smuggled it to Shanghai to despatch it," Sun Yat Sen said. "Surely, they are fighting already. Prepare everything for our immediate departure to China."

WITH the mutiny of Wuchang in October 1911 the revolution had become a fact—in the South. Yang, the soldier marched and fought for it, in company with many soldiers, students and farmers.

In Pekin, rattled eunuchs were running round in senseless activity. Hardbitten reactionaries looked darkly at each other. Everything was topsy-turvy. nobody knew how to face the disturbing events. In the hour of distress they remembered Strong Man Yuan Shi Kai, the fat traitor face, the energetic organizer.

He took over command of the loyal troops and sent them into battle. In this fight of which he only understood that it was a fight against the landlords, Yang, the soldier was killed. A bullet hit him, blinding his eyes and destroying his dumb brain. In the fiery pain of his death he thought to hear his father sigh over the empty hiding-place of their money.

Yuan Shi Kai wasn't killed. No bullet hit him, he hadn't to sigh for money—his hiding-places were

foreign banks abroad. But he lost the fight against Yang's comrades. A great number of his troops deserted and went over to the rebels. The fat layer under the skin of his face trembled. He was an experienced politician and he knew: if they wanted to preserve the order of things, they had to sacrifice the Manchu Dynasty. They had to sacrifice them to keep everything else. But the Manchu had to be sacrificed in a manner which left them their fortune and made it possible for them to wait for their chance again. If one didn't sacrifice them immediately, even men like Yuan Shi Kai wouldn't be able to survive as power in the state.

On twelfth February 1912 Hsung Tung, the Emperor, now six years old, had to abdicate. But the fat layer under Yuan Shi Kai's face hadn't ceased to tremble yet.

Sun Yat Sen was standing at the window and looked tired out at the city. The coolies of Canton were hastening to their work, he could see their ribs under their tight, dark skin as they were running through the dust-filled lanes. It was very early. He had thought the whole night to solve the problem. And he had found only one solution, only one.

The four men whom he expected, came in. They were not important men, rather minor members of his party. But they were the first whom he had called to tell them his idea. He wanted to study the effect of his proposal on them before he repeated it in front of the public to whom he, Sun Yat Sen, Provisional President of the Chinese Republic, was going to speak.

And the men whom he had called had a great advantage—he could trust them to keep to themselves whatever he confided to them.

The first one was an old man, bald, with eyes almost hidden in a net of deep wrinkles. He had been a farmer, had participated in the Taiping rebellion and the Nienfei revolt. Then he had fled from town to town, from village to village, had hid here and there to organize secret organizations. Never, although his life was in constant danger, had he tried to leave China. Sun Yat Sen had from Japan, from Europe, from America created the Party ; this man, unable to conceive the idea of a great, all embracing party, had spent his tiring, underground life on secret organizations of the farmers. His slogans were clear : "Never again the Manchu. Republic. Unconditional redistribution of land."

The next was a fine featured young man. He had studied in America and knew more of finance than the shrewdest experts of Old China. He wished for a republic on American lines: Unhampered development of individuality. Protection of property rights. Democracy to develop the sciences. Mechanization. He was against redistribution of the land as, according to his view, this would endanger China's finances.

The third man was a senior officer, middle-aged, with a broad, good-natured face. People said he was fond of underhand business transactions and open to corruption. But Sun Yat Sen trusted him, he was ready to fight for the new idea which would unite China, and make her judge in her own country.

He was in favour of a democracy in which the army had the final say. He was opposed to agrarian

reforms but advocated heavy taxation of the landlords to equip and pay the army.

The fourth man was very young, his face was almost childlike, under an overhigh blank forehead. He wanted emancipation of the youth, emancipation of the women, a strong China, a powerful army, an untiring literacy campaign, expulsion of all foreigners, distribution of all land among the farmers. He didn't understand anything of finance and almost nothing of warfare, but he was a fanatic speaker.

Sun Yat Sen watched them enter. Honest, efficient men, he thought. We all are honest, efficient men, ready to die for our ideals. But what have we achieved by now? Nothing. Did we create a national China? The country faces dissolution into reactionary and revolutionary provinces, hostile to each other, disintegration. A democratic China? We are going to convoke Parliament and Provincial Assemblies. But that is mere machinery. The peasants cry for land, the coolies starve, the landlords in the North giggle. National Unity? Strength to resist foreign powers? Very soon we shall have devoured each other in the bloodshed of civil war. But perhaps I have found the solution.

He asked the four men to sit down.

"I invited you here," he said, "to communicate to you, first of all people, an important decision. I have decided to resign as President of the State."

The young man with the high forehead was the first who could muster words.

"Why?" he stammered. "For what inconceivable reason.....you.....no more President.....why?"

"Tell me what we have achieved." Sun Yat Sen asked.

"We shall achieve everything." the young man exclaimed.

Sun Yat Sen rose and pointed at a map of China nailed to the wall.

"Tell me, what of this is ours?"

"All of China—very soon," the young man said.

Sun Yat Sen smiled, so did the General and the Finance Expert. The old man looked at Sun Yat Sen without comprehension. The General hemmed.

"Speaking from a military point of view," he said. "we control the South-West up to Nankin. The North is still in the hands of the reactionaries although we defeated them repeatedly."

"Do you think it possible for us to take Pekin without a long and sanguinary civil war which even might lead to our ruin?"

"Revolutionary and reactionary military forces are now about equal," the General said. "We won't be able to take them by surprise. The fight would exhaust both parties."

"In spite of that—we have to dare it.....!" the young man exclaimed.

"Our finances are by no means sufficient," the Expert said.

"Do you think it possible that Yuan Shi Kai at last accepts our proposals of reconciliation? Up to now they were in vain."

"Yuan Shi Kai is a turtle egg, a fat dog, a traitor," the young man said grimly.

"But he constitutes the power in the North. Why don't you answer my question?"

"Yuan Shi Kai is your merciless enemy. He takes all this personally. In his heart of hearts he is still loyal to the Manchu however he may betray single members of that dynasty," the Finance Expert said. "He will never come to terms of reconciliation with us. And.....he can't be bought over. I was thinking of that," he added smiling.

"He can't be bought over and he could be bought over," Sun Yat Sen said.

"But you haven't to buy such vermin over," the young man said desperate. "We have to crush them. If it costs millions of victims, we have to annihilate them, not to compromise with them, not to try for reconciliation. Reconciliation with somebody who would only wait for an opportunity to strangle us—it is madness."

"One would have to watch him, to keep him under control," Sun Yat Sen said.

"The whole discussion is idle," the Finance Expert said. "Yuan Shi Kai will never come over to us."

"Then there is only partition of China or civil war to the point of exhaustion," Sun Yat Sen said.

"Yes," the General said. "And—from a military point of view—an offensive against the North would just about ruin us. The enemy on the defensive is much stronger."

"In this case, the year 1912 would see China fall to pieces instead of the beginning of a process of national renascence and unification," Sun Yat Sen said. "I will not have China falling to pieces. Therefore I have to resign, and I suggest to elect in my place Yuan Shi Kai, as President of the Chinese Republic."

"What?" the young man shouted.

"It is a simple calculation. China remains united. Yuan Shi Kai wants to play the leading part. He is welcome to. I am convinced he will accept this. The Northern Provinces are behind him. He will bring them into the fold. If he accepts the office of President of the Republic, he recognizes the Republic. We shall take care that he doesn't meddle with the Legislative. Don't forget, China's unity as a country is at stake. We save it by making Yuan Shi Kai President. I bring his personal sacrifice gladly....."

"You don't bring a personal sacrifice," the young man said, pale and trembling with despair. "You sacrifice China. Not even for the sake of unity must principles be forsaken. We have to annihilate Yuan Shi Kai or he will annihilate us. To accept him as President is nothing but unconditional surrender on our part."

"Not at all," the Finance Expert said. "The President of the State is a purely representative figure. All we have to do is to watch Yuan Shi Kai's hands closely....."

"You will watch them, and they will strangle you," the young man said.

"I don't want civil war," Sun Yat Sen said determined. "Yuan Shi Kai will accept the office of President of the Republic and by this act recognize the Republic. The Northern provinces remain united with the Southern. I don't want secession, I don't want bloodshed. My course of action is clear."

Yuan Shi Kai drew his mouth wide and contracted his cheeks, wrinkling his nose, till his eyes disappeared in the fat of his face. He coughed, as all people in

Pekin, and blinked at the message he had just received.

"What vile trap is this again?" he murmured. "A thing like this is impossible."

He jumped up and paced up and down, panting, with bent knees. But it can't be a trap, he thought. It is too official and clear cut. He sat down again, rubbing his nose with the tip of his forefinger. They offer me the office of President of the Republic, he thought, they invite me to negotiate, they beg of me to receive a mission. They approve from the outset my retaining my soldiers. It is too appealing—it must be a trap.

He paced up and down again.

"Only.....I can't see the trap," he murmured.

"There is nothing which could keep me caught. I don't understand these fellows. To look at it unbiased, I have lost. But they treat me as victor. Of course, I bluffed and threatened, but there is nothing I could have done. And now they treat me as victor."

He stood still, bent his head back and stared at the ceiling.

"Well, I couldn't have done anything to them. But they couldn't have done anything to me. I have the North in my grip. They write their only concern is China's unity. Perhaps they really mean it!"

He sat groaning down.

"President of the Chinese Republic. Not bad. They really mean it. Of course they speculate..... Ah, now I understand on what they speculate: China's Unity. I bring the North. I have, of course, to take the oath on the constitution....with pleasure, gentlemen. Yuan Shi Kai, President of the Chinese Republic. And all this on account of the personal initiative of Sun

Yat Sen. He has already resigned, the Doctor. So, this is Sun Yat Sen whom we feared so much ? Before this spook we were trembling as long as he was abroad ? Before this ass, this half-wit ? To make me of all men President of the Republic of China..... with pleasure, gentlemen, you'll be surprised."

YUAN SHI KAI turned out to be quite a little surprise, Cheng Lun, the merchant noticed with spiteful joy. Step by step, cautiously, carefully treading, he will restore everything as it was, Cheng Lun thought, sitting in his shop and writing bills with ink and brush. These Kuomintang people had made Tang Shao Yi, a man from Canton whom Cheng Lun knew and hated, Prime Minister. And Li Yuan Hung, the man from Hupeh who had commanded the mutinous troops of Wuchan, had become Vice-President of the State. Horrible. But now—the gods be thanked—Yuan Shi Kai had become President of China ; Sun Yat Sen had, inexplicably, resigned in his favour. And Yuan Shi Kai had once shown that he was not going to be treated as a mere figurehead. The Kuomintang people had, of course, laboured under the delusion he would journey to them. Hehe. He had pocketed his new office as President, with a ceremonial smile, but he hadn't dreamt of leaving Pekin, his stronghold. The Kuomintang people who thought they were so clever had tried to force him politely by proposing to make Nankin the capital of China, but Yuan Shi Kai had at once vigorously protested.

A wise man, Cheng Lun thought, adding his sums. It was a great advantage for Yuan Shi Kai to remain in Pekin. Now the quarrel "Pekin-Nankin" swayed to and fro. Hehe. The Kuomintang people had given Yuan Shi Kai this office as President of the State, only as a bait to entice him out of Pekin like a mouse out of his hole ! But Yuan Shi Kai wasn't a mouse, he was an old fat tomcat and he remained in Pekin, purring. There he was safe.

And the gentlemen of the revolution ? They weren't so safe. Everything crumbled under their hands. Sun Yat Sen probably was by now crying in a corner over his folly to resign in favour of Yuan Shi Kai. And now there were rumours that something was brewing against the Prime Minister Tang Shao Lin whom Cheng Lun hated because he knew him.

Cheng Lun's son came running into the room. Cheng Lun had much worry with the boy. He had let him study, he wanted to make a mandarin of him. And now the ungrateful wretch had gone and joined the Kuomintang. Cheng Lun didn't dare to say anything, but it almost choked him.

The young man panted :

"An attentat on the Prime Minister. They almost succeeded in killing him. The assassins are unknown, nobody knows who is at the back of this....."

Fine, fine, Cheng Lun thought, nobody knows who is at the back of this ? Of course, Pekin is far away. What a pity I can't climb to my roof today and let crackers go off, to celebrate the attentat. The revolutionary mob would kill me.

AI-LAN was born as the sixth daughter of the unhappy Sin-Yang. He was a rich man and wanted sons. When his first wife had borne him two daughters and then remained barren, he took a second wife. She bore him three daughters. He took a concubine ; she bore him Ai-lan.

Sin-Yang went to the statues of his gods and remonstrated. Hadn't he sacrificed enough incense, perfume-powder, even silver. He looked at his wives with eyes full of hatred.

The wives looked at their children with eyes full of hatred. The first wife blamed her daughters for her husband having taken a second wife and refusing to come in to her any more.

The second wife had hoped to push the first wife completely aside. But after having borne these daughters, she had been pushed aside. Ai-lan's mother still hoped for a son because Sin Yang came in to her. But she would have liked to bear a son as her first child. Ai-lan had come as a great disappointment to her and she made her pay for it. She even omitted to swathe her feet ; though this custom was

less observed in Canton than in the North. Her fear that Sin-Yang would at once take another concubine, overwrought her. Almost every second or third day her milk had dried up and she couldn't feed Ai-lan who nearly died. But then milk came again and saved Ai-lan.

Sin-Yang's mother lived in his house. She was very old and greedily addicted to opium. That was a blessing for the wives of her son all of whom she hated as intruders. But she dozed all day in her corner and the women saw to it that her opium supply didn't run out. The children too were given a bit of opium if they cried too disturbingly.

Until her eighth year Ai-lan was backwards in her physical and mental development. Her mother hoped for her death, it was better not to have children at all than to have a daughter. For eight years Ai-lan's mother remained barren ; Sin-Yang gave up trying new concubines and took his grief to the teahouses. But one day when he came home, drunk with rice wine, Ai-lan's mother conceived again.

The nine months of her pregnancy were a torture for all the women in the household. The nervous fear of having a daughter again, drove her almost mad. The other women, even Ai-lan's grown-up half-sisters, tried every conceivable kind of medicine, prayer and black magic to achieve that the child in her pregnant body would take the form of a man-child. They hoped that in this case Sin-Yang's behaviour to all female members of the household might change for the better.

The commotion was such that Ai-lan liked to hide in a corner all the time. Ai-lan's mother shooed her away when she came near her. She was afraid the

sight of her daughter could influence the unborn child and make it a girl too.

When the day of confinement approached, all women, wives, daughters, servants were in a fever. Only Sin-Yang's mother cowered on her pillow, she could hardly sit up, her chest had shrunk, her face was only a crust of dried skin over the bone structure, her eyes not capable to look outside her opium dreams. Only her lips had retained their will and control and sucked at the mouthpiece of her pipe. Sin-Yang had fled to a teahouse. He had sworn to expel all his wives if a daughter was born again. And they knew it.

The labours were most tormenting ; as if she would like to hide the child in her body, unable to face to final decision which its appearance would bring, the woman was twisting in her pains for three days. They all despaired, but on the fourth day she gave birth to a man-child ; he had six fingers on each hand and was very tiny and feeble.

Sin-Yang was fetched from the teahouse ; he looked at his son with a rapt grin. Six fingers—that was an extremely lucky sign. But now their task was to keep the feeble little body alive.

All women in the house, with the exception of Sin-Yang's mother were the slaves of this child. Since he had been born, Ai-lan developed suddenly and surprisingly : It was as if the weight of her mother's oppressing, choking hatred had been taken from her body. Her mother was changed. She was happy although the birth had cost her health. She died after two years.

The boy lived. His body and his brain developed slowly ; he showed a tendency to anger and spite, liked

to hit whoever came near him. Once, Ai-lan whom he had given a vicious blow, forgot herself and hit back. The other wives went for her with nails and teeth, pulled her hair and beat her in a way she remembered all her life.

Her half-sisters were married off ; it cost Sin-Yang a lot of money every time and he whined about it ; he said it would be much better to sell his useless daughters to the teahouses, to collect a fortune for his son. But he was a man of some standing and couldn't afford to lose his face, selling his daughters to teahouses.

When Ai-lan was sixteen, she was to be married off. When she was told, she fainted with horror. If ever she knew a thing for certain, it was that she surely would bear daughters only. Everybody would despise her, she would suffer as her mother had suffered. She would rather commit suicide.

Two days after she had been told of her impending wedding, the victorious revolution flared up in Canton. Sin-Yang, known as a partisan of the Manchu, had to flee to the North. Ai-lan took this opportunity to do something unbelievable. She hid and remained behind. She had eloped from the sacred ties of the family.

She owned some jewellery and sold it to a jeweller and money-lender in the neighbourhood. Sin-Yang's house, in its emptiness, soothed her nerves. One day soldiers of the new Government came and asked for Sin-Yang. She told them he had gone North. They questioned her and she said simply she was Sin-Yang's daughter and had remained here because she didn't want to marry. The soldiers guffawed and cracked a few bawdy jokes but they didn't do anything to her.

They searched the house, were satisfied that Sin-Yang was not here and went away.

Ai-lan had formerly never left the house. It would have been extremely unbecoming for Sin-Yang's daughters to stroll about in the city. Now she dared to emerge out of the house to buy food in the market. There she heard one day loud voices. At first she was afraid, then she became curious. Following the noise, she arrived at a large square packed with a seething crowd. In the middle of the square a wooden rostrum had been erected, on which, flanked by soldiers, a few men were sitting. In front of them, a man with bushy brows was standing on the rostrum, shouting words at the crowd and sometimes pointing at a flag which was waving over the rostrum.

Ai-lan was quite enchanted, her father had never taken her or the other women of his household to a theatre and she had never seen a spectacle like this. She was resolved to watch it although she found herself by now squeezed in between coolies, students, pedlars.

The man on the rostrum shouted :

“I admit frankly that I committed a fatal mistake. When I resigned as President of China in favour of Yuan Shi Kai, we expected that his acceptance of this office would impose on him the duty to be, in honour bound, loyal to the Republic. We were soon disillusioned.....”

“Yuan Shi Kai was always a traitor,” a man in the crowd shouted. There were boos, catcalls, whistling. The man with the bushy brows made a calming gesture and proceeded to shout from the rostrum.

“We decided to move the capital from Pekin to Nankin. The legally elected President refused to enter

the legally chosen capital. Yuan Shi Kai remained in Pekin, lying in wait for a chance to annihilate the Republic which trusted him."

"We never trusted him," a clever looking coolie who was standing near Ai-lan, shouted in a hoarse voice. The speaker on the rostrum nodded.

"It was my mistake, as I said," he shouted. "I shall make up for it. If somebody wants to rob us of the fruits of our Revolution, we shall have to make a new Revolution—even against the elected President."

Ai-lan understood by now that the man on the rostrum was no actor, that no play was acted here at all, but that one of those strange events took place on account of which Sin-Yang had had to go North and she enjoyed her wonderful freedom. A voice, trembling with passion, shouted behind her :

"Death to Yuan Shi Kai, the traitor."

Ai-lan looked round and saw a young man. He was of middle height and slim but to Ai-lan who was small, he seemed tall. His face was long, his cheekbones pronounced, Ai-lan had never seen such powerful cheekbones. His hair, very black and shining, clung in beautiful roundness closely to his temples like an elegantly curved brush stroke in an ink drawing. His colour was a tanned dark yellow. His lips were narrow and quivered with excitement. The expression of his face was brooding. His thin brows frowned over slanting eyes deeply embedded in their sockets. He didn't stare at the orator but he listened with intense concentration. Ai-lan looked at his ear, she never had seen such small and finely chiselled ears.

He was not dressed like a Chinese but wore a

soldier's blouse with a high, half-closed collar, strange tight breeches and high boots. Although the expression of his face was tense and fanatic, it struck Ai-lan's heart as the smiling face of a fat man could never have done.

Her stare disturbed him. He looked her full into the face, the bewildered face of a sixteen years old woman. He smiled at her. This smile changed his face completely, it took all its fanaticism away, made it over-powering in its gentleness.

In Ai-lan's ears, the words of the orator who proceeded to shout on the rostrum, whirred as an incoherent buzzing. This man....., she thought, this man.....oh, this man.....

The man put his finger on his lips and pointed at the orator. Ai-lan was horrified. Had she been thinking aloud ? Choked with shame, she turned, squeezed through the crowd and ran away. The orator on the rostrum shouted :

“The future of China is at stake. We have to make a last, violent effort.....”

When Ai-lan reached her house, a hand touched her shoulder. She gave a stifled scream and, staggering round, found the calm face of the young man with the shining black, close hair looking at her.

“My name is Tuan,” he said, bowing a little. “I would like to talk to you.”

Ai-lan, in utter shame and confusion, stood silent.

“I want to talk to you,” the young man repeated. Ai-lan made a tiny, fluttering gesture.

“What are you afraid of ?” the young man asked.
“Is this the house you wanted to enter ?”

"Yes," Ai-lan breathed, "it is my father's house."

"So your father is Sin-Yang who fled from Canton?"

"Yes."

"And you remained here? Why?"

Ai-lan turned in despair and ran into the house. He followed her, caught her and held the trembling girl.

"Listen," he said. "You ought to behave more bravely, you, a girl who let her relatives flee and remained behind to join the revolution. Didn't you stay behind for that reason?"

"No."

"What was the reason?"

"I can't tell you....let me go!" She was in tears.

He sat down in her father's hall and made her sit down at his side.

"Why did you come to the meeting?" he asked.

"I didn't intend to....it was mere accident....."

"You were listening with great interest."

"I thought they were actors....it was a play....."

The young man looked disappointed.

"I thought you were a brave woman, a woman interested in the new China," he said. "We want to reconstruct China, from the very basis. This is not only a matter of politics. Our children must be educated to grow up as free men, our home life must change entirely. Our girls must be permitted to study. We need women who are our equals. There are no women in our movement. How can we educate our children to be free men when our women remain slaves?"

Ai-lan didn't quite grasp the sense of his words but their sound was good and soothing.

"I thought you had been interested in the meeting," he said sadly. Ai-lan hung her head as if she had committed a crime.

"I thought you had come to work with us. We face a gigantic fight. First against the troops of the North, against the traitor Yuan Shi Kai. Then against darkness, stupidity, reaction.....how are we to fight without our women?"

"How are we to fight without our women?" Ai-lan repeated whispering. The words seemed to her sweet and terrible. Her heart, her skin, her hands trembled.

"Did you ever hear of Sun Yat Sen?"

Ai-lan jerked her head up in negation. He jumped up.

"Sun Yat Sen," he said, "is our leader. For twenty years he organized and fought. He was an exile. Now the enemies want to drive him back into exile. We shall not permit that." He was pale and excited. Ai-lan loved the man Sun Yat Sen whom she did not know because this man loved him.

"I thought you were one of us," he said. "We need pioneers among the women. We want to build new China. Won't you help us?"

Ai-lan folded her hands over her breasts. She hardly could talk ; tears ran over her cheeks.

"If one marries.....," she whispered, ".....if a woman marries.....and she bears daughters.....she bears no son.....she only.....only bears daughters.....is she bad ?.....is.....should people

despise her and treat her.....badly.....is she bad.....?"

The young man looked at her, astonished.

"How could she be bad ?" he asked. "What can she do ? It is not her fault. We are modern men. Who has influence on the life in a woman's womb ? In new China, in our China, every woman will be respected whether she bears sons or daughters or no children at all....."

He stopped, for Ai-lan started to sob helplessly. She Clung to him and sobbed. Her head sank back and her hair got loose. Her mouth was open and she sobbed. The young man patted her, anxiously and confused. Her nearness, her embrace excited him. At last he couldn't control himself any more and pressed his lips on hers. And, while tears poured from her closed eyes, she sucked his kiss in, her lips cleaving to his as if they were her support for life.

THE revolt had roared through Canton ; and been crushed, by treachery and force. The legally elected President of the State, Yuan Shi Kai, was master of the situation. All reactionaries in China jubilated and winked, knowingly. Tang Shao Yi, the Prime Minister, had run away immediately after the attentat on him. Sun Yat Sen was in exile again. China's unity had been preserved, China's freedom bled under fat Yuan Shi Kai's heavy feet.

Young Tuan was dead, a corpse among the corpses of other revolutionaries. His close curving black hair was clotted with blood, his finely chiselled ears and heavy cheekbones smashed by bullets.

Sin-Yang had returned to Canton and discussed smiling the latest developments with Cheng Lun, the merchant. Cheng Lun smiled too, although his heart was aching. He asserted he had sent his son on a journey; but he didn't know whether his son was dead or had escaped. He only knew he had participated in the revolt. Many people fired rockets, squibs and crackers to honour Yuan Shi Kai. Cheng Lun too did so; he stumbled and almost rolled from the roof of his house.

Sin-Yang had been afraid that his house might be looted and razed. When he found it undamaged and Ai-lan still there, he embraced her and called her a brave girl. Ai-lan shrank silently from his embrace. Her face had become strange. The women thought she had become mute. But later she talked again, although rarely. Tu'an's comrades, passing the house before they fled, had told her that he was dead.

 After a few months the women discovered that she was with child. Sin-Yang first threatened to throttle her with his own hands, but then hastily got her a husband, a merchant who was facing bankruptcy. Sin-Yang paid his debts and for this consideration the man kept silent as to the condition in which his bride came to him. His mother, of course, knew at once. She was small, shrivelled, vulture-eyed. Ai-lan served her mutely, served her husband mutely, was an obedient quiet wife. The torments which her mother-in-law inflicted on her as her right, hardly penetrated her dullness. She had lost the ability to sob profusely. Now and then a few tears, that was all. Five months after her wedding she gave birth to a dead child who would have been a son.

YUAN SHI KAI worked quickly, energetically and with that instinctive understanding for the tactical advantage of incessant aggression that seems to distinguish reactionaries from the generally rather muddling and slow revolutionaries. It was absolutely necessary for him to re-establish Pekin as capital of China ; only there, in the North of reaction, was he able to reside without being in constant danger. A mutiny of troops proved a welcome pretext. For reasons of the safety of the State, Yuan Shi Kai announced, Pekin was to be again China's capital.

The party of the South was still strong. Yuan Shi Kai knew how to weaken it. He had two influential Generals arrested without much ado, accused them of conspiring against the Republic which to defend was his, Yuan Shi Kai's task, and had them shot. The leaders of the victorious revolution of 1912 had given him the means to make all their activities illegal. The disastrous step to make for unity's sake a reactionary President of State, had been taken before the Legislative had assembled; Yuan Shi Kai had time to make his preparations. The elected Provincial

Assemblies began functioning in 1912, the National Assembly in 1913. A new party was formed which turned against the President, demanding provincial decentralisation and autonomy. It was the only legal expression of the illegal movement which had been organised anew by Sun Yat Sen from abroad and which resulted in new revolts. Yuan Shi Kai knew what to do. He floated a foreign loan which he received without difficulty and used the money to suppress the nationalist revolts, to break up the elected assemblies and constitute in their stead a council with appointed members. The members nominated were friends of Yuan Shi Kai, loyal former officials of the Manchu Dynasty.

Shots fired by Serbian nationalists had killed Franz Ferdinand of Este. Mobilisations and declarations of war followed the murder of Serajevo. The quick thinking and quick fingered Japanese saw the chance they had waited for; they took Tsingtao to which, they were convinced, they had been entitled long ago. About Tsingtao there had been a quarrel between the Powers. The Japanese believed it was theirs by right. The Germans took hold of it. That it was situated in China, was unimportant. When the Japanese occupied Tsingtao on 7th November 1914, the Germans in their dull thoroughness had made it a German town. There were houses in the market style of Nuermberg and shops with signboards "Charcutier."

China remained neutral. She was rather busy with herself; Yuan Shi Kai had still to strengthen his position.

Cheng Lun's son had returned, unwounded. Cheng Lun received him gladly; after all, the boy was his son. He fired a few crackers, then asked gropingly what the boy was going to do. The boy just smiled and Cheng Lun ceased to ask questions. His son did not yet see the futility and wickedness of his ways.

Cheng Lun was rather busy. It was necessary to collect signatures for a petition which the Provincial Governors had shortly to submit to Yuan Shi Kai and which humbly asked him to agree to take over full dictatorial power.

Yuan Shi Kai graciously agreed to do so when the petition was submitted. It was a very ceremonial event. Yuan Shi Kai frowned a little when he read the petition. The text which he had drawn up himself about a month ago, had been somewhat changed. But he relaxed when he saw that the changes were there purely for reasons of more poetical expressiveness and that the political contents were not affected. He smiled, bowed and took over full dictatorial power.

THE German General Hindenburg succeeded in trapping the army of the Russian General Rennenkampf in the Masurian marshes, the draining of which he had already opposed years ago. It would have been an excellent economic measure but the visionary eyes of the General foresaw the splendid strategic opportunity of drowning great masses of the enemy. In Italy, the socialist-anarchist-nationalist chief editor of the *Popolo d'Italia* clamoured for the Italian Government to break up the Triple Alliance and declare war on Austria-Hungary. His name was Benito Mussolini; he had on account of irredentist activities been to an Austrian prison and then had been expelled over the border. In April 1915 he was as an obnoxious propagandist arrested in Italy. But his propaganda was on the whole sound. Italy declared war on Germany and her allies, Mussolini was released from prison and went on the front.

In China, a subtler struggle was going on. Cheng Lun and Sin-Yang had their hands full with a new petition. They paid ceremonial visits, bowed and spoke slowly and politely with their hosts. Sometimes

Cheng Lun thought anxiously of his son who lived quietly in his house but disappeared almost every night. Sin-Yang didn't think of his daughter Ai-lan. She was safely married, her husband had to think of her or not, just as he pleased.

The petition was the all important thing.

The date for which the first session of the new Parliament had been fixed, was approaching. It was rather to be feared that the majority of the assembly consisted of dangerous individuals hostile to Yuan Shi Kai. And Yuan Shi Kai was the man who had saved China from collapse, prevented agrarian reform and other ills. The convocation of the new Parliament was an acute threat over the heads of all well-meaning people. The best thing was to restore the monarchy. Yuan Shi Kai had discussed the question with the members of his Council. His fat face was full of worry and grief.

"Restoration of the monarchy is China's only salvation," he said. "Reconstruction of the old, blessed order. You all know how loyal I am to the Manchu dynasty....."

The faces of the former high officials of the Manchu expressed glad joy of serious consent. Yuan Shi Kai looked still more worried.

"The Son of the Heavens who retired from the leadership of the state," he said bowing to an invisible being, "still lives in Pekin. But the divine Hsuang Tung has only reached the tender age of ten years. To expose him to the strain of Imperial rule in our troubled times might mean his death. It would equal to the crime of killing the Son of Heavens. We have to wait till he is grown-up. But people are

clamouring for the restoration of the monarchy. A wise leadership of state has to act immediately....."

He looked round. The members of the Council were apparently all absorbed in profound thought.

"It will perhaps be necessary," Yuan Shi Kai said, and the worried and grieving expression on his fat face grew in intensity, "to find another apt person who in the meantime could accept the title of Emperor. But I don't know anybody worthy of this high honour and able to withstand its strain."

There was a long silence. Then a timid old man, a trembling creature of Yuan Shi Kai said in a thin hoary voice:

"Perhaps if one would propose your name, Excellency, I mean, there is a possibility....."

Yuan Shi Kai remained silent and wriggled his fat body defensively from one side to the other. The old man stopped, confused. Yuan Shi Kai looked at the others.

"Yes," they said. "Perhaps one really could...."

Yuan Shi Kai rose. He looked at the ceiling, and the worried expression on his face became still more intense.

"I cannot oppose the will of my people. As my people clamour for it so impatiently, I shall have to bring this sacrifice....."

Then he sat down, grinning.

At least a sham legal procedure was necessary to make Yuan Shi Kai whose ancestors never had ruled, Emperor while the lawful Emperor, Hsuang Tung, was still alive and to give the new Emperor Yuan Shi Kai the authority to break up the Parliament

elected by the people. A memorandum, asking Yuan Shi Kai graciously to accept the title of Emperor, was drawn up for the signature of as many trusty persons as possible. To collect signatures for this memorandum, Cheng Lun, the merchant, unhappy father of a stubborn secretive son, and Sin Yang, the happy father of a son with six fingers, went round in Canton and paid their polite and ceremonious calls.

WHAT could Japan hope from the war that had broken out in 1914? Nothing in Europe. Everything in Asia. She had already taken Tsingtao—mere chicken feed. But there were many territories in China which Japan coveted. She had waged war on Russia for the fish-teeming waters near Vladivostok and the ores and minerals of Manchuria. Now she had concluded an alliance with Russia, her rival, and with the other powers who after the Russo-Japanese war had cheated her out of the booty; she fought against Germany where the first cry of "Yellow Peril" had been raised by the otherwise quite injudicious Emperor Wilhelm II. Japan looked covetously to the South and East; but there the Anglo-Saxons ruled, far too strong for the Japan of those days. China was weak, visibly disintegrating. The other powers watched jealously over their "spheres of interest" there: nevertheless, if Japan was clever and tactful, she could make a beginning with China.

Captain Toka and Captain Tanaka, both wounded, both on sick leave in Tokyo, were sitting in a teahouse. A geisha tripped daintily away. None of the officer

looked after her. They sipped seriously of the tea the girl had brought.

"I happen to know the parents of that girl," Captain Tanaka said, "Samurai, they become poorer and poorer. I think this is very good."

Toka stared at him. He was a Samurai as well as Tanaka.

"May I ask," he said, "Why this is good?"

Tanaka closed his eyes.

"The trend of the present development," he said slowly, "will lead to a few of our Samurai aristocrats becoming contented millionaires, owners of factories, shipyards, banks, shares—while the Samurai masses will become impoverished officers and civil servants. Who is impoverished, is discontented. Who is discontented, is thirsty for conquest. Now, do you understand why I said, this is good?"

"I do."

"We shall have to draw up a program of conquest for a century and for this an enormous longing for conquest must be stirred up in the hearts of the people. This is the only way to restore the ancient splendour of the Samurai class. Now where should we start to conquer?"

"Manchuria, of course, China."

"Quite. But are we today politically and militarily strong enough to invade China and fight with four hundred million people?"

"Our honour as warriors....."

"Four hundred million people, I said, and united—if we don't prevent it. No, we have to draw up a detailed plan—for at least a century."

"And how do you propose to draw up this plan?"

Captain Tanaka opened his eyes, smiled and closed them again.

"Six steps," he said. "First step: Earn China's sympathy. Second step: Establish friendly influence in China. Third step: put forward ever increasing demands. If necessary, change your friendly influence to hard guardianship. Fourth step: Exploitation of China under military control. Fifth step: a Japano-Chinese Empire, perhaps with Chinese officials in an advisory capacity. Sixth step: Complete annexation of China."

"This is indeed a program for a century," Toka whispered.

"But by no means fantastic. Once it is realised we can start to think of Europe, America and Australia. Now, I see an enormous danger for the program I just outlined; and my influential friends are of the same opinion."

"Which danger?"

"Yuan Shi Kai. Here is a strong man of tradition and a purposive organizer. We Japanese know the possibilities of politicians cast in such mould. Now he wants to become Emperor of China. Yuan Shi Kai as Emperor might conceive a plan for China similar to ours. And it is a bitter necessity for us to keep China weak. We don't mind a nationalist China if her nationalism is hostile to the West. Playing up an ideology of common race and common tasks we could win over a China of this pattern and keep her in our leading strings. But if Yuan Shi Kai as Emperor succeeds to unite China, he sounds the death knell to our plans. He belonged to the Manchu clique and they were always anti-Japanese."

"Your wonderful foresight is right," Toka said.

"A united China under a strong, perhaps modern Emperor—I shudder to think of it."

"We have to act before the present war is over. Before the Western powers recover from their strain and exhaustion. Before Russia is again able to look East."

"There are the Chinese Revolutionaries of the South," Toka said pensively, "led by Dr. Sun Yat Sen. He is again in Japan. I think he is rather a friend of the Japanese, we could easily influence and dominate him."

"Quite so," Captain Tanaka said. "We have to act at once and to assist him against Yuan Shi Kai."

Sun Yat Sen was the brain of the 1915 revolution; the leader of the Military revolt was Tsai Ao, a young officer, educated and trained in Japan. When the news of Yuan Shi Kai's plan to become Emperor spread through China, the South rebelled in desperate indignation. Cheng Lun and Sin Yang hid trembling in their houses. Cheng Lun's son left, armed with a rifle, the presence of which Cheng Lun had never suspected. Outside their doors soldiers shouted on the streets, lined up and marched off, setting out against the North.

But all the indignant enthusiasm of the rebellion wouldn't have defeated Yuan Shi Kai so quickly, had not the Japanese strengthened the revolution of the South with money and arms and weakened the fighting spirit of the North with money and intrigues. Men like Chang Tso Lin, Military Governor of

Fengtien, had always been a friend of Japan ; when he still had been a bandit in Manchuria, he had aided the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War. To terminate the highly successful bandit career of Chang Tso Lin the Chinese Government who were not able to finish him off by fighting, had appointed him Military Governor of Fengtien ; the efficient captain of highwaymen had become a General. But he never forgot that the Japanese Government had been the first to offer money and honour for his services when he had been a thirty years old outlaw.....

The Manchu legitimists too turned against Yuan Shi Kai. They saw in his accession to the throne the irrevocable end of the Manchu Dynasty, the legitimate heir of which, Hsuan Tung the Child, was still in Pekin.

Yuan Shi Kai was squatting in front of his shrine. He had gone thinner, his fat decayed. The slack skin of his cheeks wrinkled over the corners of his mouth.

“I am finished,” he whispered. “This experiment of becoming Emperor was a mistake. Too many enemies. The rebels of the South have fought well. The legitimists have stabbed me in the back. And Japan was the wire-puller. I should have come to terms with Japan before everything else. My mistake. Now, finished. Nothing to hope any more. No soldiers left, no rounds, no money. Who will become Emperor now? Or will China really remain a republic? What does it matter to me? I am tired, much too tired. May there be chaos, I don’t care. But they will kill me—yes, they will come and kill me. That’s what I am afraid of.”

Nobody killed him. He died on the sixth July 1916, exhausted, gone very thin. His last days were a nightmare of fits of depression and fear of assassination.

LI YUAN HUNG, the Commandant of the Mutiny of Wuchang, who had remained Vice President of China while Yuan Shi Kai was President, now became President of the Republic. His good-natured face with brows drawn high was full of worry. The Parliament had assembled at last ; the Kuomintang, China's national party, had a clear majority ; but the reactionary military clique still controlled the Executive in Pekin. The quarrel between North and South was by no means finished, they watched each other darkly, there were provocations and bad feeling but none of them were strong enough to vanquish the other for good.

Kien Heng, a deserter, squatted on the riverside. The river was so wide that what he saw of the other bank was rather a foreboding than a glimpse. The day was full of rains, the sky grey with torrents. But Kien Heng, the deserter, was quite pleased ; for once he wasn't hungry. He had broken in a lonely peasant's hut, had threatened the farmer, snatched away a full dish of rice and eaten it.

Kien Heng had been a coolie in Pekin. He had

first worked on sampans, later as a porter in the city. Pekin was very beautiful, there were wide marble stairs and animals made of stone. Kien Heng loved to skip work, loaf about and look at the gardens, the wide marble stairs and the animals made of stone. He had heard of Yuan Shi Kai but he didn't care a hoot about who was ruling. One day he had strolled along, pondering on whether it wasn't better to go hungry than to tire oneself under burdens, barking warning cries for the teeming crowd that a doubled up running coolie couldn't look out from under his burden.

Suddenly he heard a hoarse voice. On a street corner a man in uniform shouted to the crowd. Kien Heng, welcoming the spectacle, listened. The man said that His Excellency Yuan Shi Kai, the beloved President of the Republic and future Emperor of China, needed soldiers to defend his precious life. The rebellious dogs of the South who had, influenced by the criminal Sun Yat Sen, overthrown the divine Manchu Dynasty whose godlike heir was now languishing in grief and obscurity, had again risen to threaten the life of the good man Yuan Shi Kai.

They were preparing to sack Pekin, to torture and kill all the Northerners and to rape all their womenfolk. Whoever would join Yuan Shi Kai's army, would have a merry life without work, wear a proud uniform and be a gentleman; he would go to the pleasant, warm South where the tiny dogs of the South would fall to dust before the strength of the men from the North and where every soldier would find the most exquisite loot of silver and precious stones. Moreover, the women of the South were

famous for their beauty ; he was able to promise every soldier at least ten dainty women full of caresses.

An old man had once told Kien Heng that from time immemorial soldiering had been the most despised profession in China. Yet it appealed greatly to Kien Heng to go to the warm South and acquire silver, precious stones and ten women full of caresses. He stepped forward and enlisted.

The man with the hoarse voice had promised him abundant bounty; Kien Heng didn't receive it but was locked into barracks. When he demanded his recruiting money as promised, they guffawed, beat him and kicked him. Life wasn't merry at all. He learned to shoot with a rifle and assault with a bayonet, day by day, he had to work more than he had ever worked as a coolie. But he ate much better and soon felt a masterful man although he hadn't received his recruiting money.

One day the soldiers received pay. There was great joy. They left the barracks, got drunk and visited teahouses. Kien Heng found there a girl called Min-ling whom he told that very soon he would own ten Southern beauties full of caresses and not be obliged to take his money into a teahouse to Min-ling. She gave him a flattering smile and cajoled by and by all his money out of him. He tried afterwards to get it back by force, but she screamed and he was kicked out of the teahouse although he was a soldier. He regretted not to have taken his rifle along. The owner of the teahouse, a giant from Aigun, with bushy brows and a hairy chest like a robber, even demanded payment for tea, rice, wine and sweetmeats and wanted to take his coat as pawn. Fortunately other

soldiers appeared on the road, Kien Heng called out to them and the teahouse owner withdrew. The soldiers wanted to sack the teahouse but the door was by now well bolted. Finally they laughed and went away.

Next day they were sent to the South. Kien Heng was unable to remember all the places they came through. He began to hate the officers. They shouted at the soldiers, beat them and cursed them. This was a time honoured part of their training but Kien Heng didn't like it. Besides, there had been an incident. Two platoons of Northern soldiers, encountering each other, had both been under the impression of meeting the enemy, had opened fire and then carried out a bayonet attack. Face to face, they realized that they were all Northerners and no enemies. But some had already been killed and many wounded. Kien Heng's section, had in passing, seen the casualties.

There was one whom Kien Heng knew, a certain Tai-Tan from Pekin. He had been shot through the arm, and a bayonet had slashed his belly; his intestines were protruding out of his blood. Another had lost his eyes. Kien Heng realized that he was now in constant danger of being killed or blinded like these men. He didn't like that at all. He didn't quite know why he should fight for Yuan Shi Kai although the officer said every day this was the duty of every Chinese. He would have liked to get at the silver, precious stones and beautiful women of the South, but what good was it if his belly had been slashed open before he got there. And he had become suspicious. They hadn't given him his bounty, he had received his pay only once.

Now the officers said their pay would be the loot in the South. Kien Heng thought it was better to desert, taking his rifle with him, and loot on his own account. The unarmed peasants couldn't shoot him and they too had wives. Kien Heng wasn't so keen on a beauty. He just wanted a woman again, if she was only broadhipped and wriggled a bit. Why should he march on, footsore, and perhaps be killed for some imagined beauty in the South. Most probably the officers would take all real beauties for themselves, just as they were taking the best food.

Kien Heng didn't say anything. Two others of his section had tried to desert, had been captured and shot. He had to be careful.

One night he was on sentry duty. There was heavy rain and poor visibility. He waited till the orderly officer had come round for inspection, then he crept away. With wide, measured coolie paces he trotted the whole night North, in great agitation. At dawn he hid in a ditch, and fell asleep. When night came and he found to his joy that he was still at large, he broke into a farmer's hut and stole a chicken. He soon became accustomed to this kind of life. He soon learnt to avoid the marching files of Northern soldiers, to threaten the peasants and take their food and women for a night. He was careful to remain alone, trusting his rifle only, although this meant that he could only break into lonely and isolated huts. But gangs of his kind were traced and hunted ; alone, he was always able to hide. So he avoided not only soldiers but also other marauding deserters.

Sometimes a frightened peasant, to put him in gracious mood, told him of news and rumours which

filtered through. Yuan Shi Kai had been defeated and killed. Soon the land would be redistributed ; then there would be a law entitling every peasant to kill the landlord if he met him on his field.

Kien Heng listened, while he searched the cobwebbed corners and hiding places of the hut and glanced at the farmer's wife who, squatting stolidly, waited for what was to happen to her.

He trekked steadily Northward ; now he had reached the bank of this big river, and lying on his belly, he blinked sleepily at the little ripples which heavy raindrops caused in the water. His rifle was lying at his side, the barrel already rusty ; raindrops dripped off the butt in small streamlets.

Suddenly the grass near Kien Heng moved. He started. Jumping up, he saw another soldier, in rags, feverish and exhausted. The other squatted silently down at Kien Heng's side ; he had no rifle and this reassured Kien Heng.

“Deserter ?” he asked, grinning.

The other nodded from left to right.

“But I am from the South,” he said in a dialect Kien Heng was hard put to understand. “You are from the North.”

For a second Kien Heng was angry. This unknown man was from the South, therefore an enemy ; yet he had not the slightest fear or respect of Kien Heng although he carried a rifle. But then he thought he was a deserter and didn't care about all this any more.

“This rain is bad,” he said. “But I saw soldiers on their way. That's why I hid here on the riverside.”

“North and rain have made me ill,” the other said. “I am from Yunan.”

"Why did you come here? To spy?"

"No, I ran away from the soldiers."

"Which soldiers?"

"The soldiers of Nankin. We revolted against Yuan Shi Kai and now, I think, we defeated him."

"Hehe. And I deserted Yuan Shi Kai's soldiers."

"I ran away and went through China. I want to see why the peasants in the North don't revolt."

"Why should they revolt?" Kien Heng asked, bewildered. The other coughed, staring at the river.

"We revolted several times," he said. "I was leader of our organization in Yunan. When Yuan Shi Kai was big, I had to flee to Canton. Later I joined the soldiers and went to Nankin. Again we fought against the North. Sometimes I spoke with farmers from the North who had fled South on account of the floods. I thought these farmers in the North would revolt now. I couldn't think of anything else but the farmers in the North and how they should revolt. So I deserted and went North. I wanted to show the farmers how to rise. We in Yunan revolted several times."

"They won't rise," Kien Heng said. "Our peasants are a cowardly rabble. We coolies in Pekin, of course, we always had a shindy with the Police."

"A shindy isn't a revolt."

"Well, how do you revolt?" Kien Heng said mockingly. "You look like a very revolting man, Hehe."

"One starts secret organizations and attacks the landlords, the cheating rice buyers and moneylenders. Then one takes possession of the land and distributes it equally among all peasants and works it together,

till soldiers come and drive us out again. But once we won't be driven out again."

"You will. As long as there are soldiers, they won't stand for such nonsense."

"Why do you talk like that? You are a deserter."

"Never mind."

The other was silent for a while.

"I thought," he said again, "this man Sun Yat Sen will order to redistribute the land. But he didn't."

"Of course, not. Who would do such a thing?"

"But it would be good."

"How did you live after you deserted?"

"I went and told the peasants how to take all the land. Then they gave me to eat. Some were suspicious because I had a rifle. I left the rifle with a farmer who promised to keep it for me. But the more I came North, the more suspicious the peasants became, although I had no rifle now. Now hardly any give me to eat."

Kien Heng guffawed, patronising.

"There you are," he laughed. "Leave those stupid peasants alone. You want to help them but they won't give you to eat. I go with my rifle and put it on my shoulder and I say: Dog, give me to eat, all you have. Then he gives me to eat. I say: Dog, show me where your money is hidden. He whines and swears he hasn't any. But all peasants hide their money near their stove. When I've found it, I pretend I'm going to shoot him. He begs for mercy and howls. I say: You dog, where is your wife? There she comes already, mostly of her own free will. If she isn't too old, I lie with her but I never let go of my rifle. Sometimes I take his daughter. Then I rest a bit and

now and then I joke and pretend how I am going to shoot the peasant. Then I go away."

"Well, you are nothing but a robber and thief."

"So what? Here, look at my belly. It's full. What about yours?"

"With the peasants in the South you can't do like that....." the other said darkly.

In this moment Kien Heng jumped to his feet, mad with panic. He wanted to take his rifle but a soldier whisked past him and kicked the rifle away. Other soldiers aimed at him. An officer appeared out of the bushes through which the soldiers had noiselessly crept up. Kien Heng realized that his own section confronted him. So soon had they turned back?

They gripped the man from the South and knocked him down when he tried to resist.

"That's a spy?" Kien Heng screamed trembling.
"I've captured him, I."

"He may be a spy," the officer said. "And you are a deserter. On account of people like you we have lost the battle. People like you went over to the enemy and marauded through the country." He drew his pistol.

Kien Heng screamed wildly. The officer shot four times. Three shots hit Kien Heng and killed him, the fourth killed the man who had deserted to tell the peasants in the North how to revolt.

South, unable to rule in agreement with each other, had reached the dead point of balance. Encouraged by this, the legitimists tried their hand in a revolt to restore the Manchu Dynasty to the throne. The revolt miscarried, but President Li Yuan Hung, despairing of his ability ever to master the growing difficulties, resigned. President Feng Kuo Chang, who succeeded him, declared on 14th August 1917 war on Germany and her allies.

Cheng Lun, the merchant, had died. He had left his house and fortune to his son although the boy with his Kuomintang activities had given him much anxiety and worry. Sin-Yang was a shrivelled old man. His daughter Ai-lan had borne her husband—who was on the verge of bankruptcy again—a blind daughter. Once he said to her :

“Now this cursed Sun Yat Sen has returned to Canton to destroy all trade and commerce.”

Ai-lan opened her eyes wide, a sobbing sound came out of her throat and she pressed her fists against her breasts. But at once she recovered her customary dull expression.

The act of President Feng Kuo Chang to declare war, had been received with indignation in the provinces of the South. Their representatives in Parliament now took the final step ; they seceded from Parliament and convoked an independent Government in Canton. Sun Yat Sen, landing in Canton, started at once to organize the defence of the South, planning to turn defence into a military and propaganda offensive against the North. In reality

there were now three Governments: The military clique in the North, the Government in Nankin and the Revolutionary Government in Canton.

On 16th April 1917 a man called Vladimir Iljitch Ulianov had reached Petrograd, the capital of Russia. The faces of the Prime Minister Prince Lwow and the Minister of Justice, Alexander Feodorovich Kerensky, grew long with discomfort when they heard the news.

Vladimir Iljitch Ulianov who had come from Switzerland, passing through Germany like a dangerous transit good in a locked and sealed carriage, was received by jubilating Revolutionaries. The Tzar had been dethroned, the Provisional Government of Prince Lwow tried to rule.

Ulianov did not jubilate. He began at once, sharply and clearly, to catalogue the necessities and possibilities confronting his party, the Bolsheviks. He opposed every compromise, he mocked at coalition government with the bourgeois. According to him, the only goal and one from which nothing should deflect was complete control of power in the hands of the peasants and workers.

The fight against the Lwow Government was started at once and with all means. No sentimental thought of the unity of the state disturbed him. In the war against Germany which according to Ulianov's doctrine was an Imperialist war, he propagated the defeat of Russia.

On 16th May the Cabinet was reconstructed. Kerensky, up to now Minister of Justice took over also the *portefeuille* of Minister of War and Navy. He toured the battlefields, delivered beautiful speeches

and forced the South-West offensive in July. The efforts of Ulianov to come to power, his growing followership among the workers and peasants, became more and more dangerous. Another Coalition Government was formed. The darkly and determined looking, but in reality irresolute and makeshifting Kerensky became Prime Minister without relinquishing the Ministry of War.

His position was undermined from two sides ; the Bolsheviks and the reactionary militarists whose leader Lawr Georgievich Kornilov accused Kerensky on the Moscow conference of August, to have disorganized the army by diminishing the privileges of the officers. The fall of Riga seemed to bear this out. Kornilov tried to overthrow Kerensky. He did not succeed and was arrested. But now the time had come for Ulianov.

He returned from Finland where he had hid before the warrants for his arrest were issued by Kerensky. Under his purposive organization worker soviets had been established everywhere. The Fleet and the Army mutinied. On the dead point between Revolution and Counter Revolution general strike was declared and decided the balance in favour of Revolution. In a single night the Kerensky Government was swept away, the Council of the Peoples' Commissars took over the administration.

In a state bordering on China, in great Russia, the Bolsheviks, the party of the peasants and workers, had thanks to the determined, uncompromising leadership of Vladimir Iljitch Ulianov, also called Lenin, succeeded in coming to power.

And they remained in power.

THE officer cantered up the hill. He had lost his cap. He felt the storm in his close-cropped hair. His mouth was distorted, his eyes over the torn skin of his cheeks shed tears of rage. His uniform was in rags, he was wounded in the left arm ; he didn't care.

His horse lost yellow foam under the loose bit. He drove his spurs into its flanks. Perhaps he was able to overtake the soldiers on the other side of the hill, to stem their panic, to turn them back.

Down, on the road still mired from the last rains, troops were fleeing, desperate, choked by inexplicable panic, as so many frightened children.

The troops, his—Seng Feng's troops, were running away and so decided the fate of battle. Was this the end of a year's fight, the desperate, everywhere—sabotaged fight for freedom?

The soldiers ran. For a year they had fought, no reverses had discouraged them, now, suddenly, the rot was here.

Seng Feng had done what he could. He was only a subaltern. Perhaps he still could stem the headlong flight of the battalion.

It's the fault of the Japanese, he thought, and rage almost strangled him. They had other expectations, they thought the Canton Government would silently and obediently fulfil all their wishes. As soon as Sun Yat Sen had returned, they guessed they had been mistaken. And at once they started to send money and ammunition to the North. With this money, with this ammunition we have been beaten, he thought. But we are not yet beaten!

The bare sun had crept deep down in the hills. His horse stumbled over a furrow, neighed, just avoided the fall. It was very cold but sweat was pouring over Seng Feng's face. From time to time he could see a bend in the road which was choked with fleeing soldiers. In packs, fighting against each other, they tried to overcome all before them. Panic had them in its grip,—crushing, blinding panic greater than the fear of the horse driven forward by Seng Feng's merciless spurs and whip.

At last Seng Feng saw the vanguard of the fleeing; the quickly turned rearguard of the battalion in which the artillery of the enemy had created the panic.

Seng Feng cantered down the slope, drove his horse across the road and, pulling the reins, made it stand there.

The first soldiers came running. They had thrown away their equipment, rifles, haversacks, everything that encumbered their flight. Their eyes were wide open, their mouths panting, they didn't take notice of horse or officer.

Seng Feng drew his pistol.

“Halt,” he shouted, “Stop.”

The first soldier wanted to run past the horse. Seng Feng shot him. The others recoiled.

"Soldiers," Seng Feng shouted, "you are fleeing without reason. Aren't you ashamed? Reinforcements are on the way. We have to hold the battlefield. We have to keep our freedom. Soldiers, this is the decisive battle. Long live Sun Yat Sen. Forward."

The soldiers stared at each other. Then they simply tried to run past his horse. Seng Feng, shooting, drove them back again.

"Soldiers," he shouted. "Think. It is the decisive battle. Think."

Suddenly uncontrollable fury gripped him. He screamed and shot. Where is the fault he thought. where? Why are the soldiers so cowardly, so down-hearted? Why do they lack enthusiasm?

Now the big mass of the fugitives came in sight. The road was black with them. Yellow faces with rolling eyes, sweating, shouting, panic-stricken, fear in thousand forms and bodies, they ran towards Seng Feng.

His horse grew restless. He stretched his arms out, gesticulated, shot and screamed. Nobody listened. They fled past with the elemental force of a flood. His horse took fright, pranced, turned and blindly galloped on, into the masses of the fleeing, to their van. now leading on the stream of panic. Seng Feng tried desperately to collect it. It didn't heed the bit, horror had given unfeeling to his mouth. Seng Feng shortened the reins with iron grip, the horse didn't even bend his neck, it galloped on, its black mane fluttering mockingly before Seng Feng's eyes.

He was now actually leading the fleeing soldiers.

Finished, he thought, crying. If my father Cheng Lun were alive, he would say: "Three times did you set out for Sun Yat Sen's sake. Three times were you beaten. Stop it. Be my son only, I shall burn firework on the roof of our house."

Suddenly he fired the last round of his pistol into the mockingly fluttering mane before his eyes. There was no other way to make the horse stop.

The horse broke down. First his forelegs bent, then it fell heavily on its flank. Seng Feng tried to jump clear, but his foot remained entangled in the stirrup. The horse fell on his thigh, broke it, and remained lying on it, unbearably heavy. He was not able to remove his broken leg from under the corpse of the horse.

The masses of the fleeing ran past. They didn't stop to help him. With wide open eyes, panting, breathless, panic-stricken they fled towards the South.

The defeat in the civil war was now unavoidable. In May 1918 Sun Yat Sen had to resign again. In September 1918 Hsu Shih Chang became President of the Chinese Republic. In the same year Chang Tso-Lin, the former bandit and friend of the Japanese, became Inspector-General of the Manchurian Provinces.

WENG-KUO of Shanghai was still an ace of his profession, in spite of his sixty-five years. Weng-Kuo was a member of the Guild of Thieves. His venerated father who died softly thirty years ago, had been a member of the Guild of Thieves. If Wang-Kuo who was an egotist and preferred the girls of cheap tea-houses to marriage, would have had sons, they would have without doubt been members of the Guild of Thieves, after having gone through the prescribed ordeal of showing their skill.

The Guild of Thieves was one of the largest and most influential guilds of Shanghai, working hand in glove with the Guild of Beggars ; it was often more remunerative to return a stolen jewel or bangle to the owner against a good reward through a beggar who had "found" it, than to sell it to the greedy fences.

Weng-Kuo was never hungry, He was a skilful craftsman; he knew three hundred sixty-six sleights of hand. He was able to cut open the shirt of a nervous man without provoking his suspicion. Besides, Weng-Kuo was strongly for justice and fair play. By right he should have been President of the Guild, but they elected a man who was a year younger than Weng-

Kuo. Well, justice and fair play seemed to have gone with the Manchu Dynasty.

Just now Weng-Kuo had met with success. He had pinched the purse of an Englishman who alighted from a riksha. The riksha coolie noticed Weng-Kuo's snatch. This was a bad sign of his diminishing faculties. The coolie didn't say anything, he didn't even grin. He waited till the Englishman went away, then he ran after Weng-Kuo and demanded his share. Weng-Kuo had even waited for him. It was only fair to give the coolie a share as he had noticed the transaction. The coolie thanked politely. Then he asked, just to say something:

“What do you think of the Japanese?”

The question drove Weng-Kuo's face red. He hated coolies who talked politics. The coolie misunderstood the reason that reddened Weng-Kuo's face.

“No, no,” he said, “they won't get them.”

Showing his yellow strong teeth, he bowed and went away.

Weng-Kuo spat viciously. Everybody talked politics. Even in the highly respectable Guild of Thieves they talked politics. Youngsters who didn't yet know how to steal properly, tried to teach their elders. All prattled of the Japanese, of the treacherous Government: What the hell? They should be thankful that the times were unruly. In quiet times it was much more difficult to be a pickpocket.

Weng-Kuo saw a procession coming along. Students formed it; they were shouting and displayed flags and rolls with slogans. Weng-Kuo couldn't read but he was much in favour of processions. He put his

tongue in his toothless cheek and approached the procession humbly. The students were very young and looked very serious. There was hardly anything worthwhile stealing in their clothes. But there were spectators moving along with the procession.

Weng-Kuo saw a fat merchant who with wide open enthusiastic mouth repeated the slogans of the students. Weng-Kuo was at once at his side.

"Most honourable sir," he said. "Could you kindly tell this ignorant worm what's all about?"

The fat man looked at him excitedly.

"Don't you know? We have to defend ourselves. Against the Japanese."

"I am an old man," Weng-Kuo said sadly. "And I am a provincial. What about the Japanese?"

He must have quite a fat purse, he thought. And he carries it in his kummerbund. I'm sure it's not under his cap but in his kummerbund, it makes such strange folds. On the left side.

The merchant took him by the shoulder, pointing at the slogans and banners.

"The Japanese demand special rights in China. At the Peace Conference, where all Powers have registered their demands, they asked for the cession of Shantung. And now the news has spread that our treacherous Government with Hsu Shih-Chang on top want to conclude an agreement with them and concede their demands. We don't know yet the final resolution of the Council of Ministers but we fear the worst."

"Now," Weng-Kuo thought.

But the man turned unexpectedly and Weng-Kuo had to lead his suspiciously placed hand quickly up to his own nose and sneeze into it.

"I shall never permit this," the man said. "You see our students; I am only a merchant, I have to think of my family but I will rather be butchered before I....."

Somebody came running along, roaring on the top of his voice. Other people shouted. The students screamed: "We mustn't permit that. No, we mustn't permit that."

The crowd were shouting and screaming; the messenger of bad news ran on. Then other people came shouting:

"Strike, strike, strike."

The students seemed to revive. Everybody shouted:

"Strike."

The merchant shouted:

"In this case even I am for strike."

Weng-Kuo was on the point of deftly attacking the man's kummerbund again but hesitated when he felt that somebody was looking keenly at him. He turned and saw a coolie staring with mad eyes.

"Strike," he shouted and stared at Weng-Kuo as if he were a Japanese. "Strike is best. With strikes the Russians have chucked out their Government. And now they are the masters and drive all the pigs from the country who want to swallow it. Strike. Strike against the treacherous Government. Strike against the Japanese. Long live Russia."

"That's a follower of Sun Yat Sen or worse," the merchant whispered. "Never mind. Even I am for strike. I am going. I will close my godown."

Well, that's my last chance, Weng-Kuo thought. The opportunity was good. The merchant's bloated

belly was just in front of him, he wanted to do his little sleight of hand when somebody took his arm in a grip like a vice.

Weng-Kuo, jerking round, stared into the face of a young member of his Guild. The man dragged him away. The merchant hadn't noticed anything.

Wen-Kuo could hardly believe his senses. A case like this had never occurred. A member of the Guild prevented another member from carrying out his trade. Why, that crime was punishable by death. Weng-Kuo winced under the strong grip of the other.

"You dog," he snapped, "you turtle egg. Wait. You'll be expelled from the Guild. I'll bring this before the next meeting. You'll be killed. You must have lost your senses."

The other said quietly:

"Strike."

"You imbecile, you bastard of a monkey and a rat," Weng-Kuo shrilled. "Whom do you want to rag. I am a hundred times your age. Stop your foul jokes. Let me go."

"Listen," the young man said. "We all are reliable, but you—we know you wouldn't care for our resolution if we wouldn't watch your fingers. I was sent out to tell you and all others: By order of the Guild—we join in the general strike."

"What?" Weng-Kuo panted.

"The Guild of Thieves joins in the general strike, as a sign of protest against the damned Japanese. Doesn't that go into your head?"

"The.....no.....the Guild of Thieves?"

"As well as the Guild of Beggars. This strike will be adhered to by all guilds and corporations."

"Strike? The venerable Guild of Thieves..... strike.....!" Weng Kuo mumbled. "But you should at least have waited till I had the purse of that fat man."

The other shook his head.

"Strike was already proclaimed," he said, "We have to keep discipline."

For three days there was no stealing, pickpocketing and begging in Shanghai. The Guild of Thieves and the Guild of Beggars adhered to the general strike. The violent indignation of the masses which found its expression in this strike kept without exception by all classes of the people, frightened Government into withdrawing their signature from the agreement with Japan. The Japanese suffered a serious setback. This was the beginning of the anti-Japanese national demonstrations which later led to the anti-Japanese boycott.

"WHAT an offer," Sun Yat Sen said. "What an excellent offer."

Then he saw the expression of doubt.

"Don't you share my opinion?" he asked.

The other man, in officer's uniform, shrugged his shoulders.

"This offer contains a great danger to China," he said.

Sun Yat Sen smiled.

"Danger of a Communist China? I don't think so. The China of today has no room for Communism. Once, in ancient days quite forgotten, China was a country of agricultural Communism. But today, in a time of industrialization, national deliverance and the hope of national wealth, what should we do with Communism? What is good for Russia need not be good for China. The peoples are too different. But I admire the work of Lenin and the help offered by the Russians I shall accept with both hands."

"The Russians say 'Help' and mean 'Bolshevization of China.'"

"May be. I stick to what they say. The imminent advantages of their offer are enormous. Efficient organisatory aid to our Revolutionary Government.

We just have to lay everything down in a detailed agreement. The Chinese Communist Party is weak. We shall accept her as the left wing of the Kuomintang. But the policy will be laid down by us; Democracy, giving each and every class and corporation what becomes it."

"The farmers are dissatisfied. If foreign agitation starts among them....."

"If the farmers are dissatisfied, they most probably have a reason for it. We'll have to satisfy them, but this can only be done if we carry out our reforms throughout China. To get through with our reforms we must be in power. To obtain power everywhere in China we need the military, political, organisatory and financial help of Russia. That is a simple calculation and a decisive one. Why imagine dangers? We shall accept Russian help as long as we need it. After that we shall collaborate as friendly neighbour states. The great democracy, the great citizen, worker and peasant state of China and the great Soviet State, the state of workers and farmers, Russia. We don't want Soviets but what the Russians do in their own country, is not our concern."

"I don't think the Russians are really so efficient."

"You are a child," Sun Yat Sen said. "The work which Lenin did, you are hardly able to gauge. That is the most 'efficient' thing ever seen. I admire the clearness of his brain. Lenin would have never resigned in favour of Yuan Shi Kai." He lowered his head. The young man was ashamed because Sun Yat Sen spoke of his great mistake. He got quietly up and went out of the room.

Tovarich Borodin, was a calm, stolid man whose face somehow resembled King Edward VII. He didn't come alone but was accompanied by his wife who also was his assistant, by General Galen and a staff of other instructors. None of them mentioned the dangers they had gone through on their journey to Canton or the dangers which their journey would bring them as well as the Government in Canton. Methodically they started at once to draw up a basic plan, to organize, research, calculate and appoint.

Some of the Chinese who received them had expected fiery speeches, revolutionary screams. They saw soberness, clear outlook, determination and sympathy for the struggle of China. The few speeches which he delivered stirred not by flaming phrases, but by facts and figures.

Borodin was a first class financial expert. His organisatory abilities were tremendous and he loved sustained work. General Galen was a military expert, trained in the school of civil war. When he lectured only on simple outflanking maneouvres, the Chinese officers opened eyes and mouths.

Only one kept his lips pressed together, although in his heart of hearts he admired him. That was Chiang Kai Shek, the thirty-four years old Commandant of the Cadet College at Whampoa, a man who had been soldiering almost since his childhood.

The work in the Cadet College was intense. The Cadets studied till they fell down with tiredness. It was necessary to train officers as quickly as possible for the imminent struggle. Chinese strategy and tactics were outdated, one had to learn from the Russians who had successfully finished off Denikin,

Koltchak, Wrangel, the American, Czech, Japanese armies of intervention.

"Of course," Borodin once said to Chiang Kai Shek; "our workers defended the factories and our peasants, the soil which belonged to them."

"You probably think of sovietising China?" Chiang Kai Shek asked.

"No," Borodin said seriously. "China is by no means ripe for this. Too many factors are still missing. We are helping China because we think she is a nationally oppressed country, we don't want to sovietise her. It would be unscientific. And we shall be victorious only because we think scientifically."

There was Pekin, there was Nankin and there was Canton. In 1920 Chang Tso Lin, the friend of the Japanese, tried for the first time to take Pekin. He failed and had to withdraw to Manchuria, his Province.

General Wu Pei Fu, a man from Nankin, had already in 1917 fought against the Legitimists. In 1920, forty-seven years old, he became Governor and Inspector-General of Hupeh and Hunan Provinces, which meant that he was their unrestricted ruler as was Chang Tso Lin in Manchuria.

The two Generals watched each other with hatred in their eyes. Wu Pei Fu was not only hostile to Chang Tso Lin, he was hostile to every vestige of Japanese influence in China.

In 1922, Chang Tso Lin tried again to take Pekin. Wu Pei Fu defeated him; he was acclaimed the saviour of China.

A third General, Feng Yu Hsiang, a forty years old Christian from Anhwei, became in 1921 Tuchun

of Shensi. He was fat, a good organiser and zealous exterminator of bandits and opium traders. In 1922 the man with the goodnatured face, the Commandant of the mutinous garrison of Wuchang, the former Vice-President and President of China, Li Yuan Hung, became President again. Feng Yu Hsiang, the Christian General marched against him, deposed him and made Tao Kun President of China. Then he concluded an alliance with Wu Pei Fu against Chang Tso Lin but when Wu Pei Fu started the expedition, the Christian General betrayed him, concluded an alliance with Chang Tso Lin, and Wu Pei Fu—the enemy of the Japanese—was forced to flee to Japan.

Feng Yu Hsiang occupied Pekin and made with Chang Tso Lin's help a man named Tuan Chi-Jui "Chief Administrator" of China.

The stay in Japan seemed to have changed Wu Pei Fu. In 1925 he returned to China, a great amount of Japanese money in his pockets, and came to an understanding with Chang Tso Lin. Chang Tso Lin was pleased to betray the Christian General as Feng Yu Hsiang had betrayed Wu Pei Fu. Wu Pei Fu drove Feng out of Pekin and the Christian General withdrew into Mongolia.

In these wars the soldiers became robbers, the bandits soldiers. The peasants bled white and fields lay barren. The Generals, anxious to pay their mercenaries, to spoil their concubines and to accumulate an enormous account in foreign banks, raised taxes for the next ten, fifteen, twenty, years.

The peasants fled, hid, became bandits or soldiers, or starved. A great number of them was pressed into

the rival armies as rifle bearers, for the soldiers wouldn't carry their rifles themselves. The millet fields were barren, the red-brown cattle had vanished. Soldiers had to eat. Peasants had to provide food.

All this happened in the North. In the South things had consolidated so far that Sun Yat Sen could again be elected President of the Canton Military Government.

THE officer was standing behind his General. Rain dripped from their caps. They watched the soldiers march past. The officer's name was Hsin-Hung; he had been commissioned after passing the Cadet College at Whampoa. His father had been a peasant in the South ; his father's father had been a peasant in the South. The memory of the family didn't go any further.

Rain drenched their uniforms. The buttons had become blind and rusty. The eyes of the officers were worried.

The soldiers whom they saw marching past, looked like the ghosts of an annihilated army. Their eyes were half closed with tiredness or wide open, burning with exhaustion. Their skin was full of boils and torn by hunger. Under their cheekbones were deep hollows. Their uniforms were rags, their rifle-butts splinters. Many had lost their caps and the rags they had wound round their heads were stinking with sweat and rain.

Yet their tired or burning eyes greeted the General, they turned their heads and smiled with teeth which had become loose for lack of nourishment. They tried to straighten up, to march smartly.

They knew that they had to start a new offensive.

We have come so far to the North, Hsin-Hung thought, and now, in front of our destination, nothing goes forward.

A new battalion approached, even more miserable than the last one. They weren't soldiers any more ; they were exhausted, ragged, sick people staggering on, their lives only fluttering after too many nights of strain, too many days of hunger. Yet even these men turned their heads and tried to smile at their General, to give him confidence—they, him !

Hsin-Hung felt horror in his throat.

With these wrecks they wanted to start an offensive ? With these wrecks they wanted to take Pekin ? The rains had changed the ground to trackless marsh. Swamp ghosts, that's what these soldiers were. And the North had enough money and arms from the Japanese.

Perhaps there will be a revolutionary miracle, Hsin Hung thought desperate. Didn't the Russians, starving, without clothes, without arms, drive all the armies of intervention out of their country ? Were not the soldiers of the French Revolution ragged, hungry men ? They beat the invading reactionaries ; they forced their passage over St. Bernhard. Why shouldn't we take Pekin ? But the Russians fighting against the counter-revolutionaries, defended with tooth and nail their redistributed soil, their socialised factories. Their revolution gave to workers and farmers something they could grip, could touch with their very hands. What do we give our soldiers ? A flag ? a national idea ?

Why does it rain so much ? Even the sky opposes us. I think my mind is ill, my thoughts are ill. I'd

like to know what the General thinks. His back is so straight, so sure of victory. Perhaps I've only fever.

The battalion had passed. Still the marching files didn't finish. A strange flock followed.

They weren't soldiers, they wore no uniforms. The rain dripped from their broad rice straw hats ; they marched in their bare feet ; only a few had rifles, most carried flails, pitchforks, scythes.

Peasants, Hsin-Hung thought. Sun Yat Sen has called the peasants in—and they come ! Suddenly I'm not afraid any more. But what did he promise them ? What are the peasants going to fight for ?

The General turned his head. His eyes were cold and void of expression. Hsin-Hung couldn't see whether they were enthusiastic or depressed, glad or tormented.

These eyes, Hsin-Hung thought, eyes of a machine. He should win—with these eyes. But what did Sun Yat Sen promise the peasants ?

Wen Lo had always been a bit queer. Sometimes he said there would be a time in which nobody would use his cattle to till the fields. It would be done with machines. Just as now some people didn't travel in buffalo carts any more but used a long row of carriages drawn by a steaming engine, which was stronger than a thousand oxen. He had never seen an engine like that but he had heard of it.

When fat Fu Tsin had replied that this was no engine but a demon, Wen Lo had openly declared there were no such beings as demons.

The peasants had been terrified. On the whole it had been a memorable evening. That Wen Lo, after

all he said about demons and people who believed in them, went home without having his neck turned and was still alive and merry next morning, was a miracle. But apparently not one wrought by demons.

As regards demons the peasants couldn't believe Wen Lo. But in other matters he was unquestionably right. For instance, that the land should be common property of all peasants. Their grandfathers had told them that once upon a time, long, long ago, this had been the case. It had been the Golden Age. Wen Lo was for restoring the Golden Age.

He was right, but the peasants didn't quite know how to go about restoring the Golden Age. From times immemorial they had founded secret organization which had lasted one year or two years or five years and then trickled asunder. And never had they resulted in anything else but soldiers coming to the villages and massacring people.

But now, they heard, strange things happened in the world. Once a man had come, a lousy beggar yet clever, who told them that all the countries of the earth had gone to war and completely annihilated each other. Only China remained. He described in great detail how all huts in all other countries were burning and devils dancing in and out with the flames.

He asked whether the peasants knew that there was a war on in China and that China wasn't really China any more because the Manchu had been hunted out of the country.

That the Manchu had been expelled, the peasants had already heard but never believed, because there hadn't been the slightest change in the conditions of the farmers. That war was going on, they were ready

to believe because they knew that soldiers marched to and fro and tormented the peasants in the plains; fortunately, their own village in the mountains was quite out of the way.

The beggar said that there were now three capitals in China. In the North, in Pekin, the old capital, a mighty warlock was sitting, commanding innumerable demons. In Nankin there was an Emperor who for many days was lying on his deathbed yet not able to die. In the South, in Canton a magician was doing mischief who had declared war on the demons of the warlock in Pekin. The magician's name was Sun. He had powerful, bushy brows which were the seat of all his evil strength. But the beggar thought the demons from the North were going to cut his brows and then he would be weak and an ordinary being. The peasants were quite horrified. A child, listening with wide open mouth began to cry, so afraid was he of the brows of the magician Sun.

Wen Lo protested and called the beggar a liar, because, he said, there were no demons. But the beggar asked him naughtily whether he, Wen Lo, had ever left this village and wandered all over Cathay like the beggar; from Shantung to Chinghai and from Canton to Kirin. He, the beggar, had seen all these places, in fact in a single day he had seen more than Wen Lo in his whole life and he had flown over the ground in a cart which had been drawn by a demon..

"Here, it is a demon," fat Fu Tsin exclaimed, and all peasants laughed because the beggar had shown up Wen Lo. Wen Lo was furious.

"If you listen to the fairy tales of such a spittling,

lousy, filthy, idiotic beggar like little children—I don't mind. You'll never become men."

The peasants screamed with laughter. They gave the beggar rice and hot water. He ate with his toothless, spitting mouth, rolling his eye-balls; sometimes he made a triumphant gesture and gave a dry, baying laugh. He had shown this peasant.

Eight weeks after the beggar had wandered out of the village, another stranger appeared. He was a thin, young fellow who wore a uniform and spectacles. Accompanying him, two men from the next village came, rather embarrassed.

"This man has been talking to us," they said. "And we don't know whether to believe him or not. We want to hear your opinion."

The thin young man asked the peasants to assemble and started to talk to them. In the beginning they hardly understood what he said because he spoke a refined and literary Chinese, and they were hard put to follow him. He said about this:

"Peasants, Sun Yat Sen, the leader of the New China, has sent me and others like me to the villages to ask for your assistance. You know that the spirit of the New Revolutionary China swept ten years ago the Manchu out of the land. Treachery and reaction cheated us out of the fruits of this victory. Our leader, the organizer of the Kuomintang, Sun Yat Sen, had to languish in exile for years. But now he is here to lead you and us to wonderful glory."

The peasants looked at each other. All they could grasp was that it had been a spirit, whether a good or an evil one, who had devoured the Manchu. But the man from the next village who had brought this

fellow, told them to be silent. He had started his speech in the same manner there, they hadn't understood a word, but later he had said very strange things indeed.

The young man looked anxiously from behind his thick glasses at the whispering peasants, then he proceeded:

"Peasants, we face a bitter struggle. In the North, in Pekin, the military hyenas are ruling. In the country of the middle, in Nankin, sick weaklings govern. But in Canton Sun Yat Sen has established his Government. His rule, revolutionary rule assures us of victory. But we have to gather all our strength. Let us flock to Sun Yat Sen's banners. This very hour, this very moment. Peasants, you will not desert us. You have always been fighting for your freedom. Follow the message of Sun Yat Sen, the man from Kwantung."

Slowly the peasants grasped what this thin fellow wanted. Here was proof of what the beggar had said, only the beggar had spoken much clearer and more convincing. This Sun Yat Sen was the magician with the broad brows. And his henchman was here to entice them to fight for him against the demons of the warlock of the North, who even was master of hyenas. Everybody knew that hyenas were gifted with black magic.

They stared at him, angrily. Fat Fu Tsin said, rather subdued—perhaps that fellow with the glasses was a minor wizard himself:

"We should stone him. I'm not going to fight against demons and hyenas."

The young man with the glasses shouted :

"Peasants, for whom are you going to fight if you join Sun Yat Sen? For yourself. Not the Generals of the North, not the weaklings in Nankin will bring you what you long for: redistribution of the land. Only Sun Yat Sen can give you that. And he can give it to you only if you help him to defeat his enemies, to create a strong united revolutionary China. If you fight for Sun Yat Sen, you fight for yourselves, for your children. Long live the Chinese Republic. Long live Democracy. Long live the Redistribution of the Land. Long live Sun Yat Sen."

He finished hoarsely, took his glasses and wiped the sweat off the lenses. The peasants stared at each other. Redistribution of the land? Well, that was a different thing. But still they didn't understand what was it all about. Suddenly Wen Lo popped up at the side of the young man with the glasses.

"Idiots," he shouted. "What are you waiting for? To arms. This man Sun Yat Sen wants to lead us to fight for the Golden Age. Don't you understand? The Golden Age."

Yes, the peasants understood. They pressed round the man with the glasses and asked questions: Was it true that Sun Yat Sen was a magician? That all his magical strength was in his bushy brows? Wasn't he afraid the demons from the North would cut his brows off?

The young man panted for air. He was a student from Canton, the mission entrusted to him weighed heavily on his soul. He had decided, in case he didn't succeed to bring the peasants to assist Sun Yat Sen, to commit suicide.

"Sun Yat Sen is no warlock," he cried desperate. "He is a scientist. Here, look at his picture. Is this the picture of a magician?"

He fished Sun Yat Sen's picture out of his sleeve, a small photo an enlargement of which he had put on his shrine at home. The peasants took the picture cautiously with their big work-roughened hands and studied it carefully and worriedly. One gave it to the other.

The man Sun Yat Sen looked powerful and he had bushy brows; but his own emissary denied his magic powers.

"If he is no sorcerer how can he help us?" the peasants murmured. "Only a magician can help us."

Wen Lo shouted:

"There are no sorcerers. I don't believe in sorcerers. And what if he is no warlock? Now we have an opportunity to regain the Golden Age. Land and soil common to all. At least we must try for it."

"He is right," the peasants said. "If it is for the Golden Age, we've got to try everything. We'll arm, all of us. We got to try at least."

"So, you are going to fight?" the men from the next village asked.

"Yes," fat Fu Tsin said. "What if he isn't even a magician. We got to try."

"We go to tell our people. In this case we too will fight."

The student who understood the language of the peasants as little as they understood his, looked frightened after the men who had led him here and now silently turned and went away. Were they

deserting him? But then he saw the peasants dragging all kinds of arms out of the huts: Old daggers, flintlocks, spikes, scythes, sickles, pitchforks.....

Closing his eyes, he swallowed hard.

"I'm bringing the peasants," he thought.

IT was not possible to take Pekin. On account of the treachery of the Governor of Canton, Sun Yat Sen had even to leave Canton and to take refuge in Shanghai. But the peasants whom he had called to arms, did not desert him once they had made up their mind. It took quite a time till they made up their mind, it took quite a time till they flocked to the army. But then they came in big numbers, resolved to take revenge for everything they had suffered up to now, to take possession of the soil they tilled, to fulfil the slogans of the Taiping Revolution which, not forgotten, once again went round :

“Where there is land, it will be tilled by all. Where there is food, it will be eaten by all. Where there are clothes, they belong to all. Everywhere there must be equality. None must go hungry or cold.”

They fought furiously. The revolutionary General Chiang Kai Shek proved a brilliant strategist and tactician. The Russians helped. In 1923, Sun Yat Sen was again able to establish his and Kuomintang rule at Canton.

The peasants waited for the fulfilment of what had been promised to them.

Wen Lo returned to his village with only one arm. But he was glad he was still alive. He embraced his wife with his one arm and patted her firm back.

Fat Fu Tsin had been killed. But all who returned said he had fought like a bear. He, who sometimes had fled before a pig which he thought was a demon, had declared he didn't care whether the robbers from the North were demons or not. He had refused to use a rifle as he didn't know what to do with it. But he had ran his pitchfork into the bodies of many enemies. At last he had done this to a tall Northern officer. But this man, with the pitchfork in his bowels, had still had strength to fire his pistol and the bullet had hit Fu Tsin between the eyes. Fu Tsin hadn't let go of the pitchfork and he and the officer had broken down together.

All the men of the village, with the exception of the very old and a cripple, had been to battle. About one third of them had been killed ; their wives yelled their grief through the village. Almost all had been wounded. But they laughed and started to till the fields which in the meantime had been cared for by the women. It was joy to till the fields ; they belonged to them now, no doubt, and they hadn't to pay taxes and rent from now to eternity.

SI-LING gave her mother Dao Fan bitter grief. Dao Fan remembered her father who had been a mandarin and a light among the literati, with deep respect. He had been esteemed at Court; once he had had the honour to read to the Dowager Empress his learned commentary to the different commentaries on the Tao-teh-king of the wise Erh Li of Chu.

Dao Fan's mother had been a refined and thoroughly educated lady. She had taken care that Dao Fan's little feet had been swathed well; in fact, Dao Fan was hardly able to do a step.

Her father had negotiated her marriage with Li-Teh, the scion of another mandarin family who at that time still studied for a career as a civil servant. The wedding, in accordance with the standing and wealth of both families, had been extremely ceremonial.

Li-Teh was a handsome man, Dao Fan was an obedient wife to him. She bore him a son whom they called Tao and a daughter, Si-ling.

The affairs of men are no business of their wives. Before Si-ling was born, Li-Teh moved to Pekin. In 1912 he openly embraced the cause of the rebels who had driven out the Manchu on whose court Dao Fan's

most honourable father had once read to the Dowager Empress.

Even before that, Li-Teh had given his wife much fear and grief. He had tried to convert her to his views. She didn't talk back but she remained sadly silent. He had forbidden to swathe Si-ling's little feet. Then, for the first time, Dao Fan had lost her outer composure. She couldn't just sit and see how the future of her little daughter was ruined. She had tried to swathe Si-ling's feet on the sly, but Li-Teh had discovered it and torn the bandages from Si-ling's feet.

He had threatened to divorce Dao Fan if she tried to "cripple" Si-ling's feet. He had actually said "cripple" as if Dao Fan was trying to blind Si-ling or cut her arm off. Were Dao Fan's wonderful tiny feet of which she was so proud, crippled? Of course, she was hardly able to move. But then, for what did aristocracy exist?

Later Li-Teh became more moderate and assisted Yuan Shi Kai; as Dao Fan feared, only because Yuan Shi Kai was in power. At home, in the education of his children, everything was topsy-turvy. Li-Teh insisted on Si-ling learning exactly the same as her brother; and although Tao was two years older, she excelled him in courage, even in wildness. It broke Dao Fan's heart to see how this little girl jumped about.

The horrible Revolution came. Sun Yat Sen took possession of Canton. Nothing that ever had been Dao Fan's pride and support, was left; no nobleness, no refined, literary education, not the composure and calm of her times. Everything was hasty, vulgar.

Li-Teh recognised the rebel Sun Yat Sen. He was

a man and her master, he could do as he liked. Tao, now eighteen, ran about in a rebel uniform. He too was a man and his father approved of his doing. It was no business of Dao Fan although she was his mother.

But how was Si-ling running about ?

First and foremost, she did run about, on the roads like a.....like a.....it was not good to speak the word.

With other young girls she marched to meetings. They carried a flag, they sang on the street. Her, Dao Fan's daughter was singing on the street. She talked politics as if she were a girl in a teahouse frequented by politicians.

It was more than the heart of a mother could bear. The reason of all this is, Dao Fan thought desperately, that I was not permitted to swathe her feet. Had I swathed her feet, had she tiny aristocratic useless feet, she couldn't run on the street and—a lady had whispered this to Dao Fan—deliver speeches to other girls. Everywhere they have ceased to swathe the feet of the female babies. One day the men will see how bad big feet are for the character of a woman. It was only meagre consolation for her that other young girls of good families ran on the street and worked in the Kuomintang Youth Organization. She only knew that it would never be possible to marry Si-ling off, not with her past. A girl that had been singing on the streets !

Li-Teh checked her nervously whenever she complained to him. He was overworked, slogged from morning till evening in the Ministry of Finance. The financial conditions were appalling, the question of new

sources of financing Government pressing. He was of the opinion that it was an absolute necessity to raise the taxes of the farmers.

One day Si-ling came home, carrying a large picture of that man Sun Yat Sen. She put it on the family shrine.

“Here,” she said and her round little face with the tender skin smiled. “Here he will be worshipped from now on, our leader and liberator.”

Dao Fan didn’t care to say anything. For Tao too came and looked raptly at the picture.

I should have swathed her feet, Dao Fan thought. It is Li-Teh’s fault. Now it is too late.

PATER DOMINIK SCHOEDL was a peasant's son from the Tyrol. His home was a village high up in the Alps. The peasants spent their energy climbing. When they wanted to cultivate the steep rocky slopes of the mountains, they had to carry up the soil handful by handful and throw it on. At forty they were dried-up old men yet they mostly lived till they were a hundred.

Dominik Schoedl loved to hear that he would have made a good lumberjack. The study of theology had made him short-sighted, he blinked through mighty glasses, but his peasant body had remained strong as an ox.

For twenty years now he had been Catholic Missionary in China. He was just describing in great detail to an American Methodist Missionary who had just arrived in Shanghai but was not able to proceed to the interior, how he had worked in China and what at last had happened to him.

"In the night," he said, "they have knocked at my door. Three peasants, Christians. They've told me to chuck it. Because the peasants have sworn to kill all foreigners and also all their Chinese big noises in Canton and in Nankin and in Pekin. All of them have

promised them redistribution of the land, and nobody has kept his word. Not even Sun Yat Sen. Now there is only one thing left to them, they have said, and that is to kill all of them, all the big liars with their swollen heads and just take the land. Everywhere in China. They wouldn't like to kill me, they have said, because I am now twenty years with them, but they have given their word. All foreigners. So, they said, chuck it and run. I've told them I would like to stay on and help them...."

"Pardon me," Rev. Dullby, the Methodist, said shocked and looked accusing through his pincenez. "You wanted to help them?"

"Well, not in the killing part, of course. But I've seen that whatever I would talk, they would now rebel. And in a revolt like this there are always wounded whom one has to nurse, or who are about to die and to whom one may give the last ointment. The poor devils."

"You feel pity for these people? Don't you know what they are doing just now? There is murder, rape, arson.....They are bloodthirsty heathens."

"I am a peasant," Pater Dominik Schoedl said slowly. "I know how these peasants feel. In our village, in the Tyrol we've carried the feed every day eight hours in a wooden "kraen" on the mountain to prevent the cattle from starving. And when the cattle were alright, the lawyer or the tax collector appeared to take them on some warrant or other. Bloodthirsty? Do you call it bloodthirsty if they come at night and beg of me to run away for the love of Christ, so that they needn't kill me? Heathen? Well, the one shouts he is a Christian and sins worse than any heathen, and

the other is a heathen because perhaps he doesn't know better, but he leads a Christian life. Heathen? Well, for centuries these peasants have been frightened with demons. No wonder, they still run to their village idols. But do you know how they help each other when one is in need?"

"Quite," Reverend Dullby said, being a man of the world. "But you will certainly agree that behind these peasant revolts in China, Moscow's hidden hand threatens the existing order."

"I didn't see Moscow's hand. Not the right one nor left one. Not even a finger. I didn't see any agitator, only desperate peasants whom the bosses everywhere want to shove taxes on their backs till their necks snap. Why don't they give them what they promised them? You have no idea of the misery in these districts. 'Give Caesar what's Caesar's,' O yes, but also give the peasant what belongs to the peasant."

"You really want to defend these people? You seem to love them."

"That's my profession, to love them, my dear man," Dominik Schoedl said. "And I've grown up in the village. For twenty years I've been living among Tyrolean peasants, for five years I've seen how the people behave in the cities, and another twenty years I've lived among Chinese peasants. I've seen that by nature they are kind and peaceful. I've seen that they sweat and toil day and night and have nothing of it. I've seen how the people in the cities only would like to sentence them to more toil and more taxes and more toil and more taxes. You beat a horse once too much, and it will kick you in the face. That's the truth about the bloodthirsty heathen, my dear man."

"I think you almost would have liked to grab a rifle and participate in the revolt."

"That doesn't suit the cloth I wear," Dominik Schoedl said wistfully. "But nothing can stop me from preaching the truth. It is written: "Come to me, ye miserable and burdened." And it is written: "Thou shalt not bear a false witness against thy neighbour." And it is written: "A camel will rather go through a....."

"All this is written, indeed," Reverend Dullby said politely. "But will you excuse me now? I have to go. Our Reverend Patterson is giving a lecture on the persecution he and his family had to suffer from these debased peasants. They had to hide outside their mission and to spend more than five nights under the sky....."

"God help us," Dominik Schoedl said stubbornly. "Five nights under the sky. Give him my sincere condolences, my dear man."

"ARE you here?"

"Yes." Sun Yat Sen took his wife's hand, pressing it feebly. The room was kept dark; the doctor had said Sun Yat Sen must sleep.

His wife was sitting at his bedside. He and she knew that he had cancer, that there was no hope of recovery, that the body of the man Sun Yat Sen was disintegrating irrevocably.

How tender her hand is, Sun Yat Sen thought, how I love her. The clearness of her skin and the clearness of her mind beautified my life. Suddenly another thought pierced his brain torturing him more than the pains in his body.

"I am afraid Chiang Kai Shek is scheming against the Russians," he said.

"I don't think so," his wife said, against her better knowledge.

"One should have given the peasants more," he murmured. "Much more. I should have kept my promise.....I am so uncertain now....."

"Your picture is on all family shrines," Madame Sun Yat Sen said in her clear, energetic voice.

"The picture," Sun Yat Sen said bitterly. "It is so tormenting to know that one is going to die and the work one wanted to finish will disintegrate like the cancer disintegrating my body. The picture! That will remain on the shrines. But what are symbols?"

His wife petted his hand silently.

"Did you see how Chiang Kai Shek looked at Borodin and Galen when he heard I had cancer?" the sick man asked.

"I am afraid you don't believe in the people enough," his wife said. "Sometimes I wanted to tell you about it. You believe too much in single men. The people know what you want, the people understand you....."

"But the people can't organize. Men must organize, single men, perhaps even wrong men."

His wife remained silent. She had met Sun Yat Sen when she had been a student, had been his secretary, assistant, comrade, wife. Never had she seen him lose his confidence. Now, that the progressing dissolution of his body had torn him from his unfinished work, he tortured himself with analyses of the future.

"Chiang Kai Shek is scheming against the Russians," he whispered. "And the peasants—oh, my God, I shall go away as one who didn't keep his promise."

"If the peasants won't be given anything, they'll take what they want," he heard the voice of his wife in the darkness. "I'm sure of that. Now, you must sleep, please."

Sun Yat Sen sighed and closed his eyes. Behind his lids the darkness was still more intense. Memories flashed through it, floated on menacing colours,

dissolved into each other till one became outlined, clear, remained : that woman in Canton.

The Governor of Canton had decided to betray him. Soldiers crept uphill to the temple in which Sun Yat Sen had established his headquarters. They wanted to capture and kill him. In the city the battle was fierce. A soldier escaped to warn him. He had to flee if he wanted to save himself for the revolution. And he had to flee alone. He said goodbye to his wife. His heart ached when he looked in her beautiful face, her clear eyes. She remained behind like a sacrifice. But she smiled.

A few loyal soldiers guarded the temple ; they silently took their posts at the machine-guns. He remembered a thirteen year old drummer boy from Amoy. His head was shaven, his face round and childish. With smiling eyes he looked after Sun Yat Sen as he sneaked away.

Before the enemy soldiers reached the temple, the others opened fire. Sun Yat Sen's wife gave the order to prevent an early discovery of Sun Yat Sen's flight. The soldiers on the hill slope hesitated ; they didn't know how strong the defenders of the temple were. The officers drove them forward. With difficulties the soldiers were able to take the top of the hill from which they could fire at the temple itself.

Everything his wife had later told him of that episode, lived through.

One after the other, the soldiers defending the temple fell. The last to be killed was the drummer boy from Amoy. His hand still rested on the machine-gun, his thick lips smiled ; blood drizzled over them.

Only a single soldier was still alive. With him

and her servant girl Sun Yat Sen's wife escaped. She was able to hide in the city and later to flee from Canton.

Sun Yat Sen crept through the dark roads. The fire hadn't ceased, the dying revolution battled still. Suddenly he saw a section of enemy soldiers turn into the road. He stood still, pressed against a door, which, unlocked, gave way. He almost fell into the compound. Rapidly crossing it, he tried to hide in the main building. When he entered the door, a woman came towards him.

She was ugly, spent, had sleepy, inflamed eyes, a worrying dull face. She looked at him attentively, and suddenly her face was full of fear.

She is going to betray me, he thought.

He listened. The soldiers were just passing the outer wall.

"I am sorry," he said. "There is some shooting going on the market square."

She stared at him.

"Yes," he said resolute. "I am Sun Yat Sen."

She broke into uncontrollable sobbing. He did not know why but he took her hand to console her.

"You knew Tuan," she whispered.

Sun Yat Sen searched his memory. He hadn't known any Tuan.

"Tuan....." she whispered. "Tuan....."

"I am in danger," he said hard. "I am hunted. Do you want to help me?"

"Yes," she murmured. She pressed her face in her hands and went back into the building. He

followed her. After a few seconds her despair subsided. She took her hands from her face.

It was still older, still uglier now, with her eyes red and her lips and cheeks swollen with crying.

"I am Ai-lan," she said. "Where do you want to go? If my husband comes home he will betray you."

"I want to reach the docks," Sun Yat Sen said. "But I don't know how to get there without being recognized."

Without a word she gave him a woman's garments. He understood and hastily pulled them on, veiling his face. He was stocky and heavyboned. But there were women like that.

The woman Ai-lan went with him. Nobody cared about two frightened hags who fled from road to road.

In the harbour he was able to go aboard a gun-boat the Commander of which was a reliable friend. Before he went aboard he looked intensely at the ugly face of the woman.

"You have been very kind," he said.

"I did it for Tuan," she said. Then she turned and went. He saw her back tremble and knew she was sobbing in torment.

While the boat made for the sea, to bring him to Shanghai, he tortured his brain. He had known so many men. But Tuan?....Tuan? An unknown soldier? Tuan?....

Sun Yat Sen startled out of his dream. His wife had left the room. He was in heavy pains, his throat was parched, he struggled for breath.

Another day, he thought, two days perhaps..... He fell into stupor again. The ugly face of the

sobbing woman appeared, came nearer and nearer, grew and grew. Suddenly the beautiful, calming face of his wife shone through it. He felt tormenting pity, much more important than the pain lacerating his body. Through the fading faces of both women soldiers were marching. No, not soldiers—peasants in rice straw hats. Rains poured from the sky and extinguished everything. Only the face of his wife shone feebly through the menacingly condensing darkness. He wanted to take it in his hands, draw it towards him, liberate it from the growing darkness. He sat up in his bed and raised his arms. Then he collapsed suddenly and there was only darkness.

When Madame Sun Yat Sen returned to the room, she found her husband dead. Although she had been expecting this for weeks, grief overpowered her. It was the grief of two orphans, her grief and China's grief.

His picture will be on every shrine, she thought, he will be worshipped, immortalized, his name will go down through the centuries. But what will become of his work? Oh, the tormenting fear of the poor dying.....

She knelt at his side and kissed the sweat of death from the sunken face, the bushy brows.

The day was the 11th March 1925.

THE END

